



BUTTERFLY

A growing caterpillar's cells, which later become the butterfly's cells, are distributed at different locations within the body of the caterpillar. Small clusters of tiny cells, called imaginal buds, embody the blueprint of the butterfly. The caterpillar's immune system recognizes these as foreign and tries to destroy them. ("You'll never get me up in one of those things," one caterpillar is rumored to have told another as they watched a monarch ascend from a cocoon in early spring.) As the buds arrive faster and begin to link up, the caterpillar's immune system breaks down and its body begins to disintegrate.

Still, the butterfly doesn't "compete" with the caterpillar. There's no battle for dominance; the butterfly is not an alien organism developing within the caterpillar. The caterpillar/butterfly is a single organism, with the same genetic code. Through a powerful, devastating process it is no longer a caterpillar. It is transformed and reborn as a butterfly. People who experience being engaged with a powerful force that seems to lift them beyond themselves seldom fully understand what happens in such moments. Nor do they find it easy to talk about the experience. Something has been annihilated. Something extraordinary has been born.

The lucky ones, like the butterfly; realize they have a limited amount of time to spread their new wings, and soar.

Thompson, Keith. What the Butterfly Knows. IONS. Noetic Sciences Review. June – Aug. 2000. Pgs. 9ff.

"What the caterpillar calls the end of the world the rest of the world calls butterfly." (Richard Bach)

It is amazing how a caterpillar spins about itself a hiding place from which it emerges and takes flight as a butterfly with delicate, iridescent wings. Similarly, Christ lived as a human being who freely entered into the hiding place of death to emerge, deathless, filled with light and life, utterly transformed. Our faith proclaims that in following Christ we experience the same thing: "Therefore if any person is in Christ, they are a new creature; the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Jim Finley

PS: This set me to wondering if our intuition of eternity could come from imaginal buds given to each of us at birth.