This poem was written in the summer of 2024. I used information on the life cycles and migration patterns of several insect species we have in Western New York to express my feelings concerning growing up and how some are forced by their conditions to mature earlier than their more privileged peers.

Mayflies

we have a cold, wet spring upstate
from the fishflies' winds to the north
across soldier wings on the lakes
comes brown march when mayflies are born
and long-jawed beasts build a new home
our water is pelted with rain
the beast's lair is battered and torn
but all the web knows is to stay

mayflies will die every day
until fall takes monarchs from home
the Californian coast keeps change
from their long, chambered childlike hearts
if we wrap ourselves in their warmth
we'll skip our winters' bitter rain
in fire hydrants and old theme parks
is where butterfly hearts will stay

caught in a web and met with fangs
mayflies will die out in the sun
orb webs are not made with retreats
soldier legs are not made to run
mayflies can't live in pollution
in the brown springtime upstate lakes
when milkweed is coated with bugs
who grow up knowing where to stay

fall will welcome us with cold arms
spring will freeze northern lakes someday
we want a winter warmed with hearts
as a year-round reason to stay

