Butterfly blood

When I was a kid,
there was a song in the charts
in which the singer’s dreams seemed
to infiltrate his lover’s dreams: it sang
of *the bright, elusive butterfly of love*, but even
then, I heard it as *butterfly blood*, as if the lover,
dreaming, expected to kill the thing he desired.

And now, I picture a butterfly, too scared to
emerge from its Pandora’s box, in case the
first being it meets – rather than let it sit
on the back of his hand and breathe
with its tortoiseshell wings – might
swipe it to a smear of greasy dust
and butterfly blood.