

children in directions she never herself arrived at. She only/ navigated and travelled the seven windows of the house, and the two/ doorways.” Brand is wise enough not to explain the paradox: the question of being anchored and poor and a woman, versus being unmoored and incoherent with possibilities. Both options have their problems and their benefits.

*Fierce Departures* functions as a showcase for Dionne Brand’s considerable gifts, and provides a delightful introduction to her range, her pre-occupations and her unforgettable sound. Read this collection if you would like to understand why she has won so many awards, and how well she has earned her position as Poet Laureate for Toronto.

\*Galloway, Matt. Interview with Dionne Brand. *Here and Now*. CBC Radio One, Toronto, September 30, 2009.

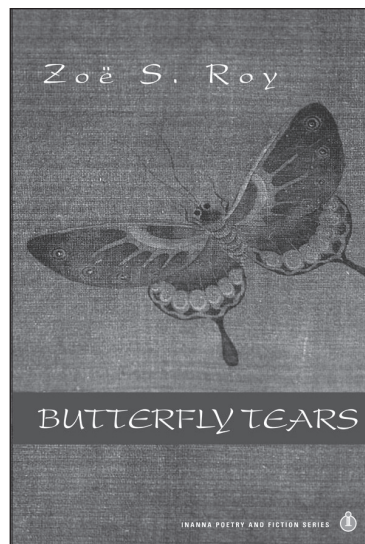
*Elaine Jackson is a writer, yoga teacher, and juggler of part-time occupational therapy contracts who dreams of someday being as poetically talented as Dionne Brand. She lives north of Mount Albert, Ontario—pretty much in the middle of a swamp.*

## BUTTERFLY TEARS

Zoë S. Roy  
Toronto: Inanna Publications and Education, Inc., 2009

### REVIEWED BY MARLENE RITCHIE

The themes in Zoë S. Roy’s first collection of fifteen short stories, *Butterfly Tears*, are universal. They explore whether our lives are predestined and, if not, whether we are free and have the courage to better them. This exploration differs from the usual, because the life questions are explored through fictitious narratives depicting Chinese women



living in China, or as immigrants to the United States and Canada, and they relate to life between 1934 and 1996. All but one of Roy’s stories are told solely or in part by Chinese women with a particular focus on the status of these women as influenced by history, culture, and education. The plots are about relationships and are realistically set in the Chinese countryside and small apartments or in North American cities. Characters take on reality as they engage in daily life. The players could be Western women except for the fact that these women are bound by upbringing and memories to their homeland. We are persistently reminded of this tie in dreams and flashbacks. “Yearning,” “Twin Rivers,” “A Mandarin Duck,” “Gingko,” and “Life Insurance” explore the theme of women’s search and expectation that each woman will find the security of a “Mr. Right.” “A Woman in China,” and “Noodles” reflect on the teachings of Confucius prevalent in Chinese society, where the woman is to subjugate her wishes to those of her father and then to her husband. “Frog Fishing,” “Ten Yuan,” and “Balloons” are stories about patriotism and the lives of people during the Cultural Revolution, and about the realization by some people of their lack of freedom. Though uncovering family secrets often figures in the plots, this is the focus in “Fortune Telling” and

“Wild Onions.” In the latter story the woman comes to understand why her family members were labelled as “evil people.” In the tales “Herbs” and “Jing and the Caterpillar” women with unusual courage chart new paths. The first story, “Butterfly Tears,” sets the tender, reflective tone of the book. While the protagonist Sunni hears a familiar melody on the radio, “she sinks into the music’s sweetness as the memories it triggered played in her mind.” She sees herself as a child again, questioning her grandmother about love and life and pondering her present relationship with her husband. She is reminded of Grandmother’s story about Liang and Zhu: forbidden to be lovers, they soar together as butterflies in the afterlife. Nostalgia, tears, hope, and resolve come to the fore in Roy’s stories, and we are led to weigh the course of our own lives.

*Marlene Ritchie is a Toronto freelance writer. Her essays and stories are inspired by her family experiences, nurses’ training, years of teaching in Japan and China and being a partner in the auction business. She is on the Advisory Board for Child Research Net, a journal dealing with issues involving children.*

## MOTHERING IN THE THIRD WAVE

Amber E. Kinser, Ed.  
Toronto: Demeter Press, 2008

### REVIEWED BY KATELAN DUNN

Analyses of mothering tend to generate diverse reactions and elicit powerful responses. Despite the burgeoning literature that exists on motherhood and mothering, the same debates surrounding the value of motherhood, the nurturance of family, and the possibility of mothering as a form of activism which promotes, deliv-