



## Fallout

by Letty Butler

Routine they said.

Beneath the bandage his cheek is a rainbow of ruin. Fraying yellows, bilious mauve, a smack of black. Butterflies hold his face in place, their tiny plastic legs twisting at odd angles.

We shuffle to the chemist, my arm in his elbow's crook.

People look.

He trips on the step, staggers and falls.

Mutters a *bugger*.

—*Bad luck Pa*, I say.

Takes four to scrape him off the floor. The heaviest frailty.

Afterwards, Dignity demands he drives.

Uphill start—stall.

A cabbie hoots, shouts something obscene and demeaning.

*He was a Marine*, I shout at exhaust fumes.