*Papaver somniferum*

Poppies are used for remembrance of wars fought and

lives lost, lest we forget the blood spilled to free us.

They grew from dark, green stalks next to the cool, sandstone

of our home’s foundation; explosions of orange and red silk.

Their dark centers spoke to their history of

destroying generations due to their opiate power.

We were not allowed to pick them due to the fragility of the

petals so they remained rooted in the clay filled dirt of our yard.

They would dance in the breeze, sometimes partnering with

lilies, creating a bright contrast against the tan walls.

My niece, born last year, has poppy colored hair—an

homage perhaps to the flowers of her aunt’s childhood?

She displays her strength using both voice and beauty, blue

eyes laughing as she learns to root herself in this world.

She dances, fills our hearts with her perfume, and heals us through

her spirit as we remember the wars within our family and the lost lives.