

Taking Root

I've spent many hours traipsing
through the deep woods and flowered hillsides
following your scent
tracing your path
your footprints pressed into the ground
the pattern your sole left behind.
You left me behind
for a better life, for greater knowledge
for freedom from me,
from my baggage that keeps weighing you down.

But I've been compromised;
you imprinted before you went,
a handprint, a sarcastic quip, a devious grin
printed on my body, tattooed on my soul
like the inked triskelion on my back.
I close my eyes and see your lanky frame,
long legs and arms clad in a red hoodie
(a parody of the children's tale)
running towards me from your beat up blue jeep
your anger and fear taking root in each step you take.
I don't want to be here, but you can't leave.
I can't trust you. I wouldn't trust me either.

I open my eyes and all I see is the clearing,
the same burnt down house,
monkshood growing in the yard.
You've still escaped to the other side,
left this vacant town,
it's bare streets, closed store fronts, the empty parks
where we used to play hide-and-seek;
I always let you win.

I cannot blame you. I've done the same,
ran as far as I could until my lungs ached
my mouth filled with bile.
But I ran away and you're running to
a destination I will never reach.

No more howling, no more bloodshed,
A new normal that I will never find.
You will reach new heights.
I will stay planted firmly on the ground,
feet taking root in the yard,
on the hillside.
I will wait for your impossible return.