

## Autumn foretells



Nestled deep in autumn colours the bell of the white washed church tolled mournfully. Paths hide in the swaying grass and golden buttercups. Roads are only known to be there by presumption. Birdsong rises and falls. Bees drone, their harmonies interspersed by the frustration of wasps and flies. The freshness of green is fading gradually replaced by smell of nuts ripening. A hint of manure and a cow bell just out of view. Hills roll onward into mountains which roll back down to plains out of view. But often it is the things you cannot see that are the most real. Autumn holds the warmth for a while longer. Death has not yet entered the valley.

She walks calmly along the tree line, knife hanging by her side, fingers twitching around its handle. Her breath regular, calm. The task she is about to accomplish fixed in her mind. She knew this moment would come but did not expect it to be so soon. She runs her tongue across her lips as she reaches the oak front door. She turns the handle slowly. She knows he will not hear. He is too busy concentrating on things more important than her.

Step by creaking step she walks to the floor where their bedroom and his office lie. She hears him speaking overly loud and clear on some Zoom call to a foreign land with his headphones firmly fixed to his ears. She runs the knife along the bannister. She sees his head twitch slightly as if something subconscious registers her arrival. But he does not turn around. She is not important enough for his conscious brain to register. Again that flash of pain crosses her heart, squeezing it tight.

She pauses, allows herself five deep breaths. Her hand is steady again. On her last exhale she hears him end the call. She hesitates pondering whether she should wait for him to face her. She fears he could overpower her so decides to act fast.

He catches a reflection of her in the computer screen and turns slightly. All that does is make his jugular more visible. The knife plunges in. His eyes go wide. She is surprised that his whole body shakes for a moment before it can no longer hold him on the chair.

She lets the knife remain in his neck. This had not been her plan although it does stop the blood from spurting out. Instead blood rushes down his shirt and into the wooden flooring that he had spent so long varnishing. She steps backwards. She wonders if she should feel regret?

Slowly she lowers herself so she is seated on the stairs allowing her head to drop into her hands and cries. These tears join the many others that she has cried over the years. This time though they are not tears of pain, fright and anguish but tears of relief tinged with fear of what comes next.