

The Smallest of Red Dresses

Red dresses heaped on my porch.
Tucked in those large
enough for grown women
is the smallest of dresses.
the size of a large man's hand,
red flannelette with lace trim.

Ready to send for the Unistoten,
as messages hanging in trees;
signing the memory of loss and pain.
Blood soaked into the soil and snow;
blood red as dresses now marking
a route of violation of women
of girls when man camps
set loose violence and lust.

Marie, a small girl in denim overalls
takes a short walk along the highway.
Her mother knows Marie
has gone to play with a friend;
her arms cradling her favourite doll,
soft and cuddly with thick
black braids just like her own.
A doll in lace trimmed red dress
her granny lovingly stitched.

At lunch time Marie's mother
walks the same way to collect Marie,
sees ripe berries and fireweed
along the dusty roadside.
She learns too soon that
Marie had not arrived
at her friend's home.
No one has seen her;
Some one knows,
Someone in a white pickup has stopped,
Someone sped away

in the dust of stirred gravel,
stealing a child's life,
shattering this peaceful community.

Marie's mother running home,
running fast, running in fear,
running to call friends,
running to outrun fear,
maybe even to call distant police,
running to grasp hope that
the day will end happy
while deep inside knowing
As she runs, it will not.

On a shaded bend in the highway
lies Marie's doll, dirty with one arm
missing and dress torn,
glowing blood-red in the gravel.
A dress like all the others,
a flag of searing pain
and endless grief.

The smallest of red dresses
discarded like a small life;
a hand signal fluttering in the fall breeze.
Add to hundreds of other dresses
telling history from tree branches
along a pipeline route.



Poetry and banner by Theresa Wolfwood 2019