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The Stray Sod

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The Stray Sod

*A place charmed by fairies where you enter knowing everything and
then are lost*

Even though you started on a small errand,
even though it was nothing, like waxing a refrigerator door
or weeding the detroit reds, and you knew the path,
remember how easily the granite fit your arch,
how the timothy parted at your knees,
and you heard the charmed scale
of the flauty thrush, then the smell
of the vagrant riverbed, the leaning ironwood
fence threaded with yellow roses,
the abandoned circle of chairs?
You passed the place where the robin
cemented a nest and each year grew babies
the size of throw pillows. You walked through
the lily moon and the blanketflower,
past the prize offers no one could refuse,
till you entered the spinning barrel
and you began to burn? You can turn your coat now,
you can go in disguise, but you will recognize
nothing, not one face smeared against the blind forest,
not one word. The gate is gone and the path
erased behind you. Goodness is deception.
Flesh—deception in the churning oaks.
Remember the funhouse, the dark-wooded chutes,
all those mouths laughing at your blistered limbs
out of control? The world allows no virgin.
Not for long. If you're happy, you're young
You'll catch on. Strike two fingers.
See if you can find a pulse.

Sandra Alcosser