## **Forgotten Meanings**

The clock tower bell tolls in the distance and the melody of "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" is wrong in this town; it took a wrong turn at the fork by the c r a c k e d oak tree, trembled down the bumpy, discordant path full of potholes and b r o k e n road signs towards the town of Fika, a place of forgotten meanings and empty shells.

The dead autumn leaves flutter like pretty dancers, yanked from the pedestal of their oak colored music box and land on the dirt path without a standing ovation, left to be snapped under foot by blind eyes and muted ears. The children here have forgotten how to play, so they sit quietly by their parents and stare with sullen faces at plates of cucumber sandwiches and ranch dipped carrots that sit unharmoniously next to the half baked apple pie that smells too much like the stale grease of a grime stained oven.

Perfectly piled heaps of crisp warm leaves lay unsettled and uncannonballed, kissed briefly by the cool wind until they are neglected again. Twigs and scraps of burnt orange leaves no longer need to be fished

out of braids and plaid sweaters, or found under pillows the next morning, like a token left behind from sweet innocent dreams. There now lay forgotten memories in place of secrets once whispered under picnic table forts. Where hordes of candy corn and peppermint sticks were once piled like gold, lay discarded heaps, sticky and covered in sprinkles of dirt and small black ants.

The echoes of delighted screams and full belly laughs, mixed with friendly conversations about good food and Christmas presents are lost, replaced with deadened silence and empty eyes while mouths chew food with no taste and no love; just another forgotten moment in time, forming the divide between love and loss.

Begone from this town! Leave behind you the lost souls of Fika, mute your ears to the call of its bell, and desperately race further away from the dilapidated road before the last bell tolls – else its empty melody encloses the town once more.