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## After the Fire

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## Three Poems

Chad Erickstad

### After the Fire

Headline: *Fire ruins Cannon Ball school playground. "Sunday's fire destroyed a swing set and charred other play equipment at the facility on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation," Amy R. Sisk, The Bismarck Tribune, Oct. 12, 2015.*

After the fire  
     crawls slowly  
         into the playground,  
     surrounds each steel pole  
         holding the whole works  
 in the air,  
 after the  
     vivid yellows and blues  
         blister and blacken,  
     after the plastic slides  
         drip, then drizzle,  
     the swings melt  
         and drop into the flames,  
     and the merry-go-round collapses  
         and tilts unnaturally  
 to the scorched ground,  
 after this creeping horror  
     gently decimates  
         all in its inching path,

it disappears like smoke  
dissipates, seemingly out of  
existence, and later,  
when the children  
come out for recess,  
little do they know  
that right now, as they  
stand around the structure and  
stare with blank faces,  
this will be the most honest  
and seminal lesson  
they will learn at this school,  
or any other.