

Children in the Meadows and Wetlands

There are children in the meadows and wetlands

Native children ran there to hide

When teachers pulled and butchered their hair

When teachers stole their medicine bags

When teachers collected their moccasins

When teachers dressed them in strange clothes

When teachers beat them with boards and belts

When teachers starved them for being bad Indians

The children ran to the meadows and wetlands

There are children in the meadows and wetlands

Hostages who were taken to Haskell

Who never saw their families again

Who never saw nine or eleven or tomorrow

Who didn't make it home for summer vacations

Who couldn't stop whooping and coughing

Who couldn't learn English fast enough

Who wouldn't fall to their knees often enough

They ran 'til they fell in the meadows and wetlands

There are children in the meadows and wetlands

Hostages who were taken to Chilocco

Where they ran from teachers' fists and boots

Where they ran from bounty-hunters' cages

Where they ran from high collars and hard shoes

Where they ran from lye soap in their mouths

Where they ran from day and night

Where they ran until wolves outran them

Their teeth are in the meadows and wetlands

There are children in the meadows and wetlands

Hostages who were taken to Carlisle

Who got to build the school buildings

Who got Christian burials without coffins

Who got a mass grave with their friends

Who got plowed under for a football field

Who got embedded in concrete for the stadium

Who got to be the practice site for the Washington Redskins

Because they ran to the meadows and wetlands

There are children in the meadows and wetlands

Native children ran there to hide

You can see their clothes in museums

You can see their pipe bags at the opera

You can see bands marching on their hallowed ground

You can see mascots dancing over their dead bodies

You can imagine their hair long and beautiful again

Safe from teachers and scissors at last

These children in the meadows and wetlands

--suzan shown harjo