

Abandoned Playground & More

By [Diane Webster](#) (July 2025)



Pieter Bruegel (Children's Games, 1560)

Abandoned Playground

The slide whisks leaves
to the ground
like when we'd rub
waxed paper up and down
the aluminum slide
so speed dug a hole at the bottom
if we were lucky not to fling

forward in awkward flight
and even more awkward landing.

The swing seat gathers dust;
a spoon jabbed into dirt
to thicken our mud pie mix
molded into ice cube trays
to simmer and harden in sun
so we'd have something
to throw at each other.

The merry-go-round screams
rusty protest to movement
like when we played hide-and-seek,
and one of us jumped out of the night
and scared the seeker into mock death.

At night the playground disappears;
forgotten memories frightened
by rattle of a chain against
metal pole staked out
for tether ball you're afraid
will whip around and smack
you in the face giving a bloody nose
all the way home.

The Body

Finally he's dead.
So why do I hide in the dark
like watching an execution
wanting curtains to close,
wanting curtains to stay open?
Inside I scream for the door
pulleyed shut, a final clang

with no exit, jailed again,
naked as born.

Finally he's dead.
An old, fat man with a sheet
like hand-me-down clothes too small,
hands, feet poke out,
a toe tag identifies his name
as if God doesn't know him
and shrugs when He reads the tag.

Finally he's dead,
and I'm glad.
Snap off the lights, slam the door
let me leave his journey behind.

Winged Formation

Flock of Ross's geese float on the lake
until instantly they fly, swoop
around the lake and land again.
Not a good spot to land or doesn't fit;
they leap into the air again and circle, circle,
circle behind the car until shadows
fly over the vehicle,
preceding actual appearance.
Geese flutter to water like feathers,
like a squadron of paper airplanes
circling in the sky.

When I learned to fold a paper airplane,
I flung it with all my strength
wanting to see it soar miles...
not dive bomb like a shot goose
into the lawn crunching its nose,

wings unfolded from the crash.

Now paper airplanes glide
parallel from my hand
as if I release
a stunned sparrow
easing feathers back
into winged formation.

Desert Execution

Pottery lined up against the wall
ready for execution leaving shards
for future archeologists to exhume
and present presentations on violence
under the desert sun beside the road
dusty with pulverized shards
of millennia before inhaled
to entwine with human DNA
buried until the right time
for excavation.

Broken pieces of civilization
lie buried under sand blizzards
blown across the desert for millennia.
Pottery, owner bones cracked
and shattered together
like a shaken jigsaw puzzle box
where genealogy and clay
pulverize each other
in a brotherhood of DNA.

Wind's Anger

Leaves fall from the tree,
pave the lawn in cobblestones
where crickets play hopscotch
and dive into cracks
during hide-and-seek.

Leaves like jigsaw puzzle
pieces interlock themselves
on the lawn card table
forming a picture never
fully looked at
until last piece
taps into place.

But wind, easily frustrated,
bangs the lawn table bouncing
pieces ajar from their neighbors
until wind sweeps its arm
across the table; pieces/leaves
scatter from the lawn,
shiver in fence corners,
huddle in weed arms.

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Diane Webster's work has appeared in *El Portal*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, *New English Review*, *Verdad* and other literary magazines. She had a micro-chap published by *Origami Poetry Press* in 2022, 2023 and 2024. One of Diane's poems was nominated for Best of the Net in 2022. Diane retired in 2022 after 40 years in the newspaper industry.

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