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