

## DREAMLANDS HOPSCOTCH

Clouds of dust bathe legs and shoes, submerging  
clothes in drab, red hues, kicked up high by dusty shoes  
landing, hopping, landing.

*Hop two three and land. Hop and land. Then wait. And turn.*

*Go back. And start again, again and yet again.*

She'd started this some time before.

*Hop two three and land. Hop and land. Wait. Turn. Start again.*

Every day. She'd start her day this way. Each and every day

since the 'new short stay' began

a new 'short stay' to wait another waiting

since the long 'short stay' waiting

in the camp near home since

her town was broken and

her house was burned to dust.

It's picture grew more fuzzy, in her mind out in the day

though in her sleep in dreamlands, it was just a step away

guarded in a magic ball of light, where she could go and play.

Maybe dreamlands was the safest place to stay.

Hopscotch was the easy way to go to dreamlands in the day

since the teachers stopped the class, they'd taken all the books away

'to try and make us go back home,' she'd heard her mother say.

Smiling strangers sometimes came. They'd say:

'How do you feel?' 'What makes you sad?' 'What do you play?' 'What makes you glad?' 'What books do you read?'

Read? Read what? Didn't they know they'd all been taken away?

But she knew the books in dreamlands were all in there to stay.

*Hop two three and land. Hop and land. Wait. Turn. Start again.*

Soon the dreamlands came most days. And never really went away

in there she played and went to school and read

then after school she went back home and read In there. And now

the dreamlands stayed all night and all throughout the endless day.

*Hop two three and land. Hop and land. Then wait. And turn.*

*Go back. And start again Again And yet again.*