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Putting the Sioux In Center: The Games We Play

by Robert J. De Smith

In our backyard a tepee's building,
All jungle gym and patchwork blanket—
The intense games of summer.

Three children,
War painted with sunscreen,
Weave with clothespins
And gather twigs from before my lawn mower
(Its Tecumseh engine tom-toms
The beat of their lives).

Fretful, I've outlawed any
Hoops or Ughs—
And John Wayne's nowhere to be seen.
But I cannot restrain powwows,
Drums,
Hunting along the edge of our pines.

Late in the afternoon,
I'm drawn to their game:
I'm a buffalo
Whose beach towel skin—oranges and blues—
Is highly prized.
I die (brilliantly!) again and again,
Expiring in the warm grass
Before the war-giggles of my own.