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| **MONSTER, A RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL EXPERIENCE 1***By Dennis Saddleman*I HATE YOU RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLI HATE YOUYOU’RE A MONSTERA HUGE HUNGRY MONSTERBUILT WITH STEEL BONES 5BUILT WITH CEMENT FLESHYOU’RE A MONSTERBUILT TO DEVOURINNOCENT NATIVE CHILDRENYOU’RE A COLD-HEARTED MONSTER 10COLD AS THE CEMENT FLOORSYOU HAVE NO LOVENO GENTLE ATMOSPHEREYOUR UGLY FACE GROOVED WITH RED BRICKSYOUR MONSTER EYES GLARE 15FROM GRIMY WINDOWSMONSTER EYES SO EVILMONSTER EYES WATCHINGTERRIFIED CHILDRENCOWER WITH SHAME 20I HATE YOU RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL I HATE YOUYOU’RE A SLIMY MONSTEROOZING IN THE SHADOWS OF MY PASTGO AWAY LEAVE ME ALONEYOU’RE FOLLOWING ME FOLLOWING ME WHEREVER I GO 25YOU’RE IN MY DREAMS IN MY MEMORIESGO AWAY MONSTER GO AWAYI HATE YOU YOU’RE FOLLOWING MEI HATE YOU RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL I HATE YOUYOU’RE A MONSTER WITH HUGE WATERY MOUTH 30MOUTH OF DOUBLE DOORSYOUR WIDE MOUTH TOOK MEYOUR YELLOW STAINED TEETH CHEWEDTHE INDIAN OUT OF MEYOUR TEETH CRUNCHED MY LANGUAGE 35GRINDED MY RITUALS AND MY TRADITIONSYOUR TASTE BUDS BECAME BITTERWHEN YOU TASTED MY RED SKINYOU SWALLOWED ME WITH DISGUSTYOUR FACE WRINKLED WHEN YOU 40I hate you Residential School I hate you 3You’re a monsterYou dumped me in the toilet then 85You flushed out my good naturemy personalitiesI hate you Residential School I hate youYou’re a monster……...I hate hate hate youThirty three years later 90I rode my chevy pony to KamloopsFrom the highway I saw the monsterMy Gawd! The monster is still aliveI hesitated I wanted to drive onbut something told me to stop 95I parked in front of the Residential Schoolin front of the monsterThe monster saw me and it stared at meThe monster saw me and I stared backWe both never said anything for a long time 100Finally with a lump in my throatI said, “Monster I forgive you.”The monster broke into tearsThe monster cried and criedHis huge shoulders shook 105He motioned for me to come forward He asked me to sit on his lappy stairsThe monster spokeYou know I didn’t like my Government FatherI didn’t like my Catholic Church Mother 110I’m glad the Native People adopted meThey took me as one of their ownThey fixed me up Repaired my mouth of double doorsWashed my window eyes with cedar and fir boughsThey cleansed me with sage and sweetgrass 115Now my good spirit livesThe Native People let me stay on their landThey could of burnt me you know instead they let me liveso People can come here to school restore or learn about their cultureThe monster said, “I’m glad the Native People gave me another chance 120I’m glad Dennis you gave me another chanceThe monster smiledI stood up I told the monster I must go | TASTED MY STRONG PRIDE 2I HATE YOU RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL I HATE YOUYOU’RE A MONSTERYOUR THROAT MUSCLES FORCED MEDOWN TO YOUR STOMACH 45YOUR THROAT MUSCLES SQUEEZED MY HAPPINESSSQUEEZED MY DREAMSSQUEEZED MY NATIVE VOICEYOUR THROAT BECAME CLOGGED WITH MY SACRED SPIRITYOU COUGHED AND YOU CHOKED 50FOR YOU CANNOT WITH STAND MYSPIRITUAL SONGS AND DANCESI HATE YOU RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL I HATE YOUYOU’RE A MONSTERYOUR STOMACH UPSET EVERY TIME I WET MY BED 55YOUR STOMACH RUMBLED WITH ANGEREVERY TIME I FELL ASLEEP IN CHURCHYour stomach growled at me every time I broke the school rulesYour stomach was full You burpedYou felt satisfied You rubbed your belly and you didn’t care 60You didn’t care how you ate up my native CultureYou didn’t care if you were messyif you were piggyYou didn’t care as long as you ate up my IndiannessI hate you Residential School I hate you 65You’re a monsterYour veins clotted with cruelty and tortureYour blood poisoned with loneliness and despairYour heart was cold it pumped fear into meI hate you Residential School I hate you 70You’re a monsterYour intestines turned me into foul entrailsYour anal squeezed mesqueezed my confidencesqueezed my self respect 75Your anal squeezedthen you dumped meDumped me without parental skillswithout life skillsDumped me without any form of character 80without individual talentswithout a hope for successAhead of me is my life. My people are waiting for me 4I was at the door of my chevy pony 125The monster spoke, “Hey you forgot somethingI turned around I saw a ghost child running down the cement stepsIt ran towards me and it entered my bodyI looked over to the monster I was surprisedI wasn’t looking at a monster anymore 130I was looking at an old school In my heart I thoughtThis is where I earned my diploma of survivalI was looking at an old Residential School whobecame my elder of my memoriesI was looking at a tall building with four stories 135stories of hopestories of dreamsstories of renewaland stories of tomorrow 139<http://www.cbc.ca/thecurrent/episode/2014/04/03/monster-by-poet-dennis-saddleman> |