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| **MONSTER, A RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL EXPERIENCE 1**  *By Dennis Saddleman*  I HATE YOU RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL  I HATE YOU  YOU’RE A MONSTER  A HUGE HUNGRY MONSTER  BUILT WITH STEEL BONES 5  BUILT WITH CEMENT FLESH  YOU’RE A MONSTER  BUILT TO DEVOUR  INNOCENT NATIVE CHILDREN  YOU’RE A COLD-HEARTED MONSTER 10  COLD AS THE CEMENT FLOORS  YOU HAVE NO LOVE  NO GENTLE ATMOSPHERE  YOUR UGLY FACE GROOVED WITH RED BRICKS  YOUR MONSTER EYES GLARE 15  FROM GRIMY WINDOWS  MONSTER EYES SO EVIL  MONSTER EYES WATCHING  TERRIFIED CHILDREN  COWER WITH SHAME 20  I HATE YOU RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL I HATE YOU  YOU’RE A SLIMY MONSTER  OOZING IN THE SHADOWS OF MY PAST  GO AWAY LEAVE ME ALONE  YOU’RE FOLLOWING ME FOLLOWING ME WHEREVER I GO 25  YOU’RE IN MY DREAMS IN MY MEMORIES  GO AWAY MONSTER GO AWAY  I HATE YOU YOU’RE FOLLOWING ME  I HATE YOU RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL I HATE YOU  YOU’RE A MONSTER WITH HUGE WATERY MOUTH 30  MOUTH OF DOUBLE DOORS  YOUR WIDE MOUTH TOOK ME  YOUR YELLOW STAINED TEETH CHEWED  THE INDIAN OUT OF ME  YOUR TEETH CRUNCHED MY LANGUAGE 35  GRINDED MY RITUALS AND MY TRADITIONS  YOUR TASTE BUDS BECAME BITTER  WHEN YOU TASTED MY RED SKIN  YOU SWALLOWED ME WITH DISGUST  YOUR FACE WRINKLED WHEN YOU 40  I hate you Residential School I hate you 3  You’re a monster  You dumped me in the toilet then 85  You flushed out my good nature  my personalities  I hate you Residential School I hate you  You’re a monster……...I hate hate hate you  Thirty three years later 90  I rode my chevy pony to Kamloops  From the highway I saw the monster  My Gawd! The monster is still alive  I hesitated I wanted to drive on  but something told me to stop 95  I parked in front of the Residential School  in front of the monster  The monster saw me and it stared at me  The monster saw me and I stared back  We both never said anything for a long time 100  Finally with a lump in my throat  I said, “Monster I forgive you.”  The monster broke into tears  The monster cried and cried  His huge shoulders shook 105  He motioned for me to come forward  He asked me to sit on his lappy stairs  The monster spoke  You know I didn’t like my Government Father  I didn’t like my Catholic Church Mother 110  I’m glad the Native People adopted me  They took me as one of their own  They fixed me up Repaired my mouth of double doors  Washed my window eyes with cedar and fir boughs  They cleansed me with sage and sweetgrass 115  Now my good spirit lives  The Native People let me stay on their land  They could of burnt me you know instead they let me live  so People can come here to school restore or learn about their culture  The monster said, “I’m glad the Native People gave me another chance 120  I’m glad Dennis you gave me another chance  The monster smiled  I stood up I told the monster I must go | TASTED MY STRONG PRIDE 2  I HATE YOU RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL I HATE YOU  YOU’RE A MONSTER  YOUR THROAT MUSCLES FORCED ME  DOWN TO YOUR STOMACH 45  YOUR THROAT MUSCLES SQUEEZED MY HAPPINESS  SQUEEZED MY DREAMS  SQUEEZED MY NATIVE VOICE  YOUR THROAT BECAME CLOGGED WITH MY SACRED SPIRIT  YOU COUGHED AND YOU CHOKED 50  FOR YOU CANNOT WITH STAND MY  SPIRITUAL SONGS AND DANCES  I HATE YOU RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL I HATE YOU  YOU’RE A MONSTER  YOUR STOMACH UPSET EVERY TIME I WET MY BED 55  YOUR STOMACH RUMBLED WITH ANGER  EVERY TIME I FELL ASLEEP IN CHURCH  Your stomach growled at me every time I broke the school rules  Your stomach was full You burped  You felt satisfied You rubbed your belly and you didn’t care 60  You didn’t care how you ate up my native Culture  You didn’t care if you were messy  if you were piggy  You didn’t care as long as you ate up my Indianness  I hate you Residential School I hate you 65  You’re a monster  Your veins clotted with cruelty and torture  Your blood poisoned with loneliness and despair  Your heart was cold it pumped fear into me  I hate you Residential School I hate you 70  You’re a monster  Your intestines turned me into foul entrails  Your anal squeezed me  squeezed my confidence  squeezed my self respect 75  Your anal squeezed  then you dumped me  Dumped me without parental skills  without life skills  Dumped me without any form of character 80  without individual talents  without a hope for success  Ahead of me is my life. My people are waiting for me 4  I was at the door of my chevy pony 125  The monster spoke, “Hey you forgot something  I turned around I saw a ghost child running down the cement steps  It ran towards me and it entered my body  I looked over to the monster I was surprised  I wasn’t looking at a monster anymore 130  I was looking at an old school In my heart I thought  This is where I earned my diploma of survival  I was looking at an old Residential School who  became my elder of my memories  I was looking at a tall building with four stories 135  stories of hope  stories of dreams  stories of renewal  and stories of tomorrow 139  <http://www.cbc.ca/thecurrent/episode/2014/04/03/monster-by-poet-dennis-saddleman> |