

## Poems about the boarding schools (contributed by Kathy Baros-Friedt)

**A poem by Abigail Echo-Hawk (Pawnee) written in 2021** – “I wrote this for our people, I wrote it because I couldn’t quit crying as I read newspaper reports of this genocide against Indigenous people, I wrote it because my heart was crying justice that my tongue couldn’t shape words for, so my hand did.”

When they buried the children  
What they didn’t know  
They were lovingly embraced  
By the land  
Held and cradled in a mother’s heart  
The trees wept for them, with the wind  
they sang mourning songs their mothers  
didn’t know to sing  
bending branches to touch the earth around them.  
The Creator cried for them the tears falling like rain.  
Mother Earth held them until they could be found.  
Now our voices sing the mourning songs.  
With the trees. The wind.  
Light sacred fire ensure they are never forgotten as we sing JUSTICE.

**This poem is from The Diné Reader (U of A Press).** “If” is a poem written by unidentified Diné students at the Tohatchi boarding school, one of the 1st boarding schools on the reservation. 1933

If I were a pony,  
A spotted pinto pony,  
A good racing pony,  
I would run away from school.  
I'd gallop on the mesa  
And I'd eat on the mesa,  
And I'd sleep on the mesa,  
And I'd never think of school.

Source: [https://buildfaith.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/A-Service-of-Lament-Remembering-the-Victims-of-the-Residential-Schools-2.pdf?mc\\_cid=58c9dbd28f&mc\\_eid=e6a893bea8](https://buildfaith.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/A-Service-of-Lament-Remembering-the-Victims-of-the-Residential-Schools-2.pdf?mc_cid=58c9dbd28f&mc_eid=e6a893bea8)