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| **Morning in the Burned House** |  |
| by [Margaret Atwood](http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/746) | |
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| In the burned house I am eating breakfast.  You understand: there is no house, there is no breakfast,  yet here I am.  The spoon which was melted scrapes against  the bowl which was melted also.  No one else is around.  Where have they gone to, brother and sister,  mother and father? Off along the shore,  perhaps. Their clothes are still on the hangers,  their dishes piled beside the sink,  which is beside the woodstove  with its grate and sooty kettle,  every detail clear,  tin cup and rippled mirror.  The day is bright and songless,  the lake is blue, the forest watchful.  In the east a [bank](http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/16368) of cloud  rises up silently like dark bread.  I can see the swirls in the oilcloth,  I can see the flaws in the glass,  those flares where the sun hits them.  I can't see my own arms and legs  or know if this is a trap or blessing,  finding myself back here, where everything  in this house has long been over,  kettle and mirror, spoon and bowl,  including my own body,  including the body I had then,  including the body I have now  as I sit at this morning table, alone and happy,  bare child's feet on the scorched floorboards  (I can almost see)  in my burning clothes, the thin green shorts  and grubby yellow T-shirt  holding my cindery, non-existent,  radiant flesh. Incandescent. |  |