

Fire Player

For Sister Rae

It does not have to be cold
For Jurdu to light a fire
It is such an integral part
Of her daily life
A fire bucket made from
A old washing machine — excellent
Wood can be scarce in town
But grannies will collect wood around
Branches, fence pickets, anything that can burn
Poking the fire with a stick
Moving sticks around
Staring into the flames
Remembering the past and its people
Jurdu loves the fire and the memories it brings
A grill will happen if family around
Fire purpose depends on time
Early morning to warm bones
Afternoon to grill flaps for feed
Evening to make comfortable setting
For family and friends to gather
Even whitefellas gather at her fire
Jurdu the fire player.

(from Charmaine Papertalk-Green — *Just Like That and other poems*, p 70)