

Imagine a Grand Picnic

Four small boys playing tag  
chase each other around in circles,  
run away from each other if they can.  
Sometimes one goes wandering off,  
farther away, single, lonely,  
out of sight.

Tinfoil, metals, audions, and crystals  
go a different direction.  
In a minute wood follows them.

Sheets of mica  
differ in laziness a great deal,  
come to a stop.  
Do they ever begin again?

Copper wires would talk to you,  
draw little sketches  
between the water molecules:  
pocket flash lights,  
star shaped balloons.

Glass plates are magnified  
until they're planetary,  
as large as the moon  
and the earth.

## ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

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“Imagine a Grand Picnic” was created from John Mills’ *Letters of a Radio-Engineer to His Son* (1922). About the poem and the process of composing it, B. J. Buckley writes:

I wanted this poem, from this surprisingly playful technical text written to a young boy, to have play and young boys in it. I began by making lists of radio parts and of the ways the movements described in the text could also be the movements of children. I also thought of the ways in which children personify the technologies they use. I then imagined a group of boys—and personified radio components—playing outside with each other after a picnic, and let the narrative unfold.

B. J. Buckley is the author of *In January, the Geese* (Comstock Review, Inc. 2022), *Corvidae* (Lummox Press 2014), and *Moonhorses & the Red Bull*, co-authored with Dawn Senior-Trask (Pronghorn Press 2005). Her work has also appeared in *Sugar House Review*, *CALYX*, *Whitefish Review*, *Southern Humanities Review*, *december*, and elsewhere. She lives in Power, Montana.

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