

Ash in the Sand

A warm zephyr breathes out from the bush. A type that gives off an urge of caution.

The leaves are dry.

The trees have clenched together.

A kangaroo jumps out from the bush and bounces east to the sea.

My father and I are sitting on the couch outside on the patio. Just sitting back enjoying the afternoon sun with the radio buzzing in the background. After a couple of songs, the news starts and dad heads inside to start cooking dinner.

Suddenly a word cuts me from my daydream as I pricked up my ears. I heard a bush fire had started west and was moving rapidly east towards the sea.

I raced inside and shared the news with dad who didn't believe me at first but then a warning signal popped up on the old discolored TV.

Now it was for real.

Dad packed the old shack up whilst I went and spread the news with the neighbors. When I told old Jill she quickly put her knitting down and hurried off to get her ancient squash racket which she became a world champion with, back in 1967. She claimed it as her most prized possession.

We soon rounded up everyone and moved on down to the beach where we sat and watched on with terror as the smoke rose from the mountains slowly creeping down towards the shacks.

Dad had his arm around my shoulder as I sat there shivering at the thought that everything would be lost and burnt away in the flames. Old Jill was sobbing as she sat there in the sand. I thought I even saw Big Pete let out a tear. The firemen came with their big trucks and tried to contain the fire all through the night.

We were taken down south with three tinnies where we stayed the next couple of days. The third morning we were woken to hear the fire was out and were told we could take the tinnies around to see what remained.

The sand had turned a light grey and black from all of the ash. From out of the dust there was nothing besides the remnants of the shacks and trees. A timid goanna slowly crawled out from under the sand covered in ash. It scuttled down to the water to clean the hot ash off her skin.

As we strolled up the hill we took in everything that had perished. Dad told me that wildfires happen a lot and sometimes the bush needs a fire to give it new life and new growth. That helped me understand.

The new place wasn't half bad after all. There was a lagoon where we went and fished, the tree outside the house had a swing, and Old Jill met some other old squash

players. Finally, after a couple of months, the shacks and old town were built. Once again we hopped in the tinnies and headed on over to our special village. When we arrived we were shocked how quickly the bush grew back and how nice the shacks looked. I had the best feeling in the world. I felt like I was home.

Hudson Shaw

Year 7