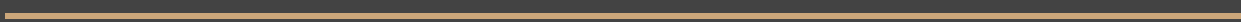
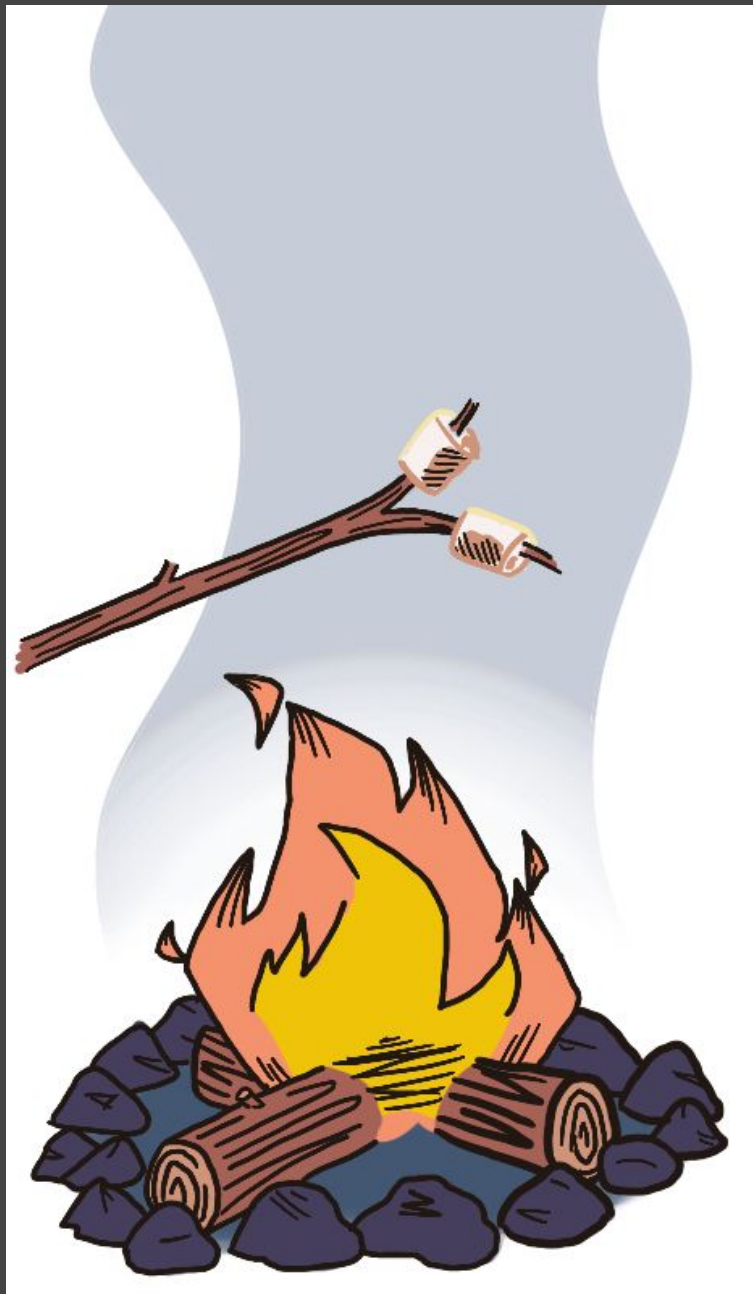


Warm then Hot

A cozy campfire poetry game

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Warm then Hot is a cozy microgame about collaboratively writing poetry and finding comfort in your friends. For this game you'll need:

1. A fire; a fireplace, or a campfire, or a bonfire. Somewhere you feel warm and safe.
2. Some friends who can gather around it with you.
3. Paper and pencils. Scissors can help, if you want them.
4. Marshmallows or some other treat you can put over heat, and some way to put them over the fire

Step 1: Preparation

Get your friends nice and comfy; make sure the fire is comfortable. Everyone should be supplied with a decent number of marshmallows; at least 4 to 5.

Cut the paper into strips and write down every hurt on your mind right now, and every wound that's still open. Write as many as you like, but I recommend 4 or 5. Discuss it with everyone a little bit after the writing's started; if everyone has a *lot* to say, you can go higher, but we want everyone's voice to be equally heard.

Can't think of anything that's hurting you? Here's some recommendations for things to write about:

- The last time you wanted to laugh but couldn't
- Something that's been stressing you out or pressuring you, at work, at home, in your own head.
- A loss you weren't ready for, or a loss you felt too ready for.
- What did someone say to you in 3rd grade that you've carried for all these years?
- Are you pining for anything? It doesn't need to be a person. A place? A state of living? An ideal?
- The world hurts right now. How does that affect you?
- What have you tried to forget? Are you sure you want to?

Everyone fold their pieces of paper up, and writes a broad emotion relating to their hurt on the paper, so they can remember which is which.

Step 2: Playing the Game

The person with the most recent hurt goes first. They cast a piece of paper into the fire, and say a piece of imagery or a feeling or a sentence that relates to it; they do not say explicitly

what was written on the paper, that should be left a mystery. After doing so, they put a marshmallow to the flame.

Proceed clockwise or right to left. If the next person in order has a follow up to the embryonic poem which relates to their own life, they may say a line. If they do, they may also add a marshmallow to the fire. If they have a piece of paper which relates to the poem at hand, they may throw it in and add two marshmallows; if they want, they can add two lines instead as well.

This game may come off as overly inclined towards those with a poetic nature. If you feel like you don't know what to say, or can't contribute, here are some suggestions for ways to get in tune with your inner poet. Feel free to interpret, remix, and change these as you like.

- Name a color that you felt when you heard someone else speak; describe something in the world that looks like it in as few words as possible
- Tell a secret memory related to your hurt, use the least accurate words you know to describe it
- What would have made you feel better? Describe not having it.
- Did you hurt yourself? Did the internal gaze make it hard to breath? Cast an eye on yourself, like a stranger.
- What made you happy? What gave you strength? Talk about the battle that you won.

Keep your marshmallows over the fire until someone says something that resonates with you, something that makes you feel something, something you relate to. If that never happens, let the marshmallow burn; it is the past you, withering away and caramelizing, becoming beautiful before it's wisped away. It's not you, not any more.

If someone has nothing to add, but it is their turn, they may give a marshmallow from a previous round that was on fire to someone who they feel needs it. If you skipped over your turn to give someone else a chance to speak, and you have a marshmallow on the fire, you may also remove it and give it to someone. If a player feels *ready* to give that marshmallow, or feels like they *ought to*, they may do so, but may not take it for themselves.

When the poem is done, and nobody has anything to add or feels like it's complete, the next person in line gets to start a new poem. **Remember:** these poems don't need to be good or necessarily coherent as a totality. Continue until there are no more open wounds, until you're all full, or until you're not getting anything out of this game.

Go out and get some tea, hold your friends close, or do whatever makes you feel together.

Example of Play

Sara, Zeke, Justine and Jade are sitting around the firepit in Zeke's backyard. They've been having a nice evening in after a particularly rough patch in their lives. They've got some snacks, the fire is crackling, and the moon is just starting to sit high in the sky. They've got a few camplights set up around the fire, to help them with their writing. Sara writes their hurts; the first one is most poignant to her, that they are too sensitive, and that when pressed they burn up all her energy too fast and becomes unloveable. They start the game; they consider what to compare themselves to, when their own marshmallow catches their eye. They throw their first paper into the fire.

Sara: "I'm scared I'm all sugar, and that even a little bit of fire chars me and turns me rancid." Sara adds their marshmallow to the fire.

The turn moves to Jade. Zie doesn't feel comfortable adding anything, so it moves to Justine. She throws her own paper into the fire.

Justine: "Whenever fire touches me, I don't move away. I just let it burn me until I'm withered away, and then I wonder what happened." Justine adds two marshmallows to the fire.

The turn moves to Zeke, who does not throw any of his papers into the fire but contributes a line.

Zeke: Once I was a part of a fire, large and vast. The three of us burned through everything we saw, until we burned ourselves out and nothing could kindle us any longer. He adds a marshmallow to the fire.

Sara has nothing to add, so they turn it back to Jade, to see if zie has anything to add before ending the poem and moving on to the next hurt.

Jade: "I look like wet wood, and nobody who ever sees me would think to try to even drop a match or strike a flint against me; I will never crackle or provide heat for anything." Zie adds a marshmallow to the fire.

Sara removes their marshmallow from the fire and hands it to Jade. It's crisped on the outside, but the inside is delicious and sweet and gooey, melting on the tongue. That marshmallow is just perfect, without a hint of being burnt.