



Rainbow Fire

Frog Hollow Preschool

2020-2021

When we think of chalk, we don't usually think of fire – but our recent inquiry with the Preschool children has a magical story that starts with chalk dust and continues with raining fire.





Chalk has been attractive to the children in many ways:

**The beautiful colours;
The ability to change form;
The relationship with water;**

**The messiness;
But what we continue to witness as its most attractive characteristic is chalk's magical ability to jump up, float & settle back down peacefully.**

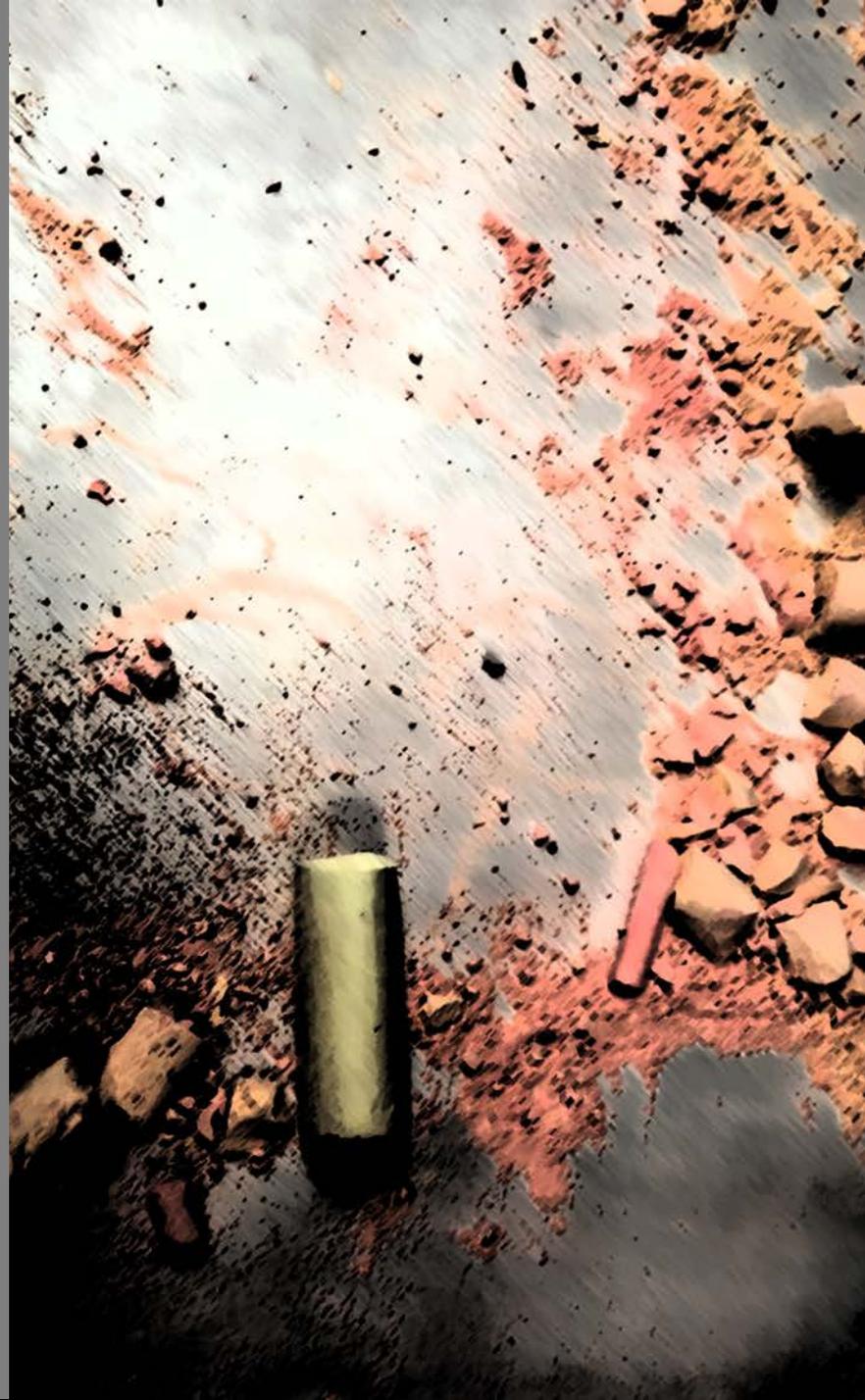
Chalk can be manipulated in so many ways:

It can be crushed
It can be squished
It can be hammered

The dust can be gathered back into a "whole"

Chalk dust is colourful
It can "dance in the air"
It can "move" fast & slow
It can twinkle down and fall on our heads

It can make a world of "every colour"



“fire dust”: “fairy dust”; “dancing in the dust” – these references to “dust” captures our attention



And Matteo's gentle invitation to imagine the chalk dust as *fire*, *dancing* in the air", leads us to thinking of the movements of fire

How is the movement of chalk dust similar to the movement of fire?



Projecting videos of campfires on large screens



Inviting fabric to the movement

Fabric can jump in the air
It can float and parachute back
It can spread – it can crunch
It can move by one – and by a collective
Fabric can also be difficult to manipulate

“It’s raining;
We threw the
fire up and
then it came
down on us”





“It wiggles”

“It bounces”

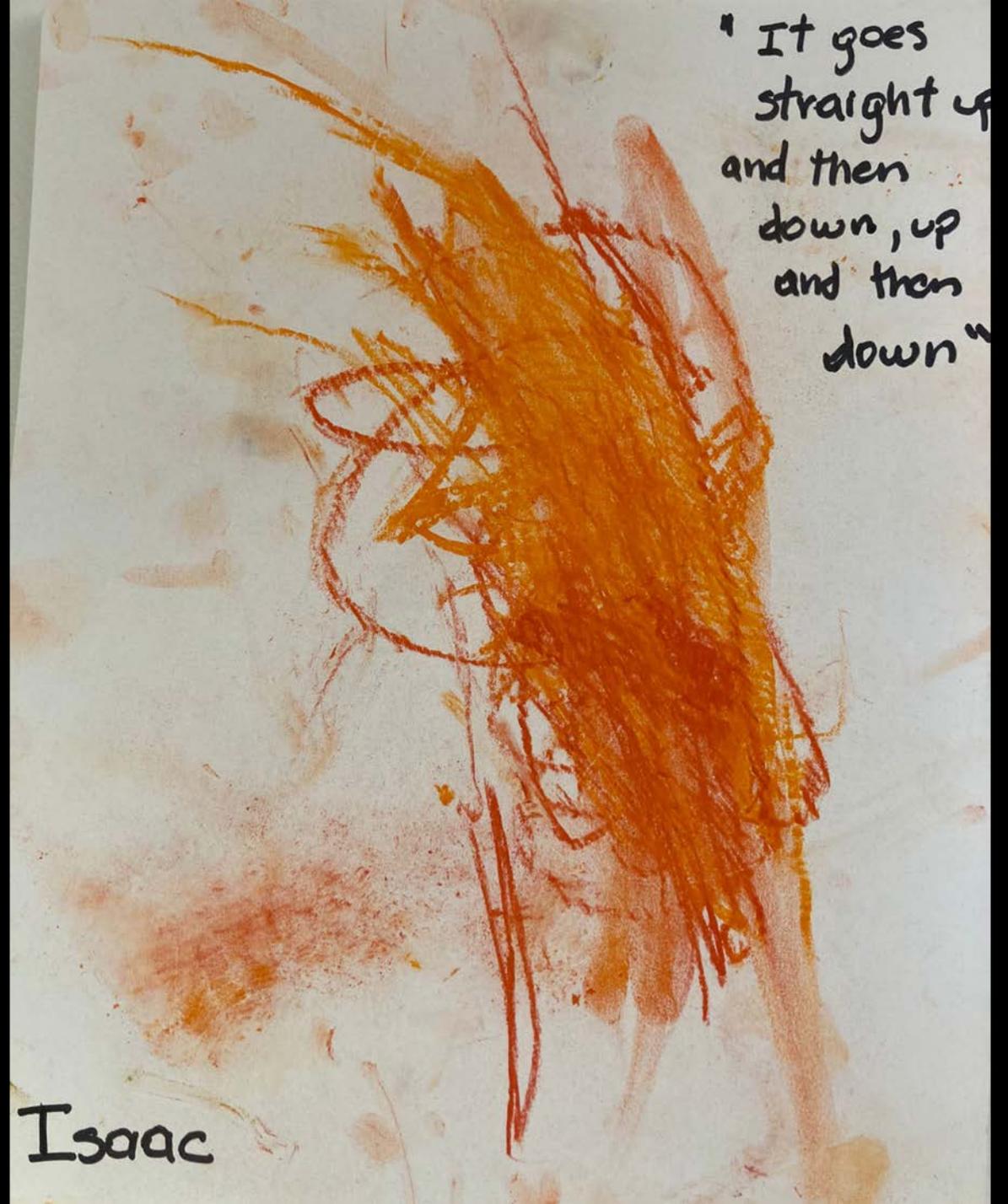
“It floats”

“It shakes like this”

“It’s like fireworks”

“Ashes go up up up and then
go down”

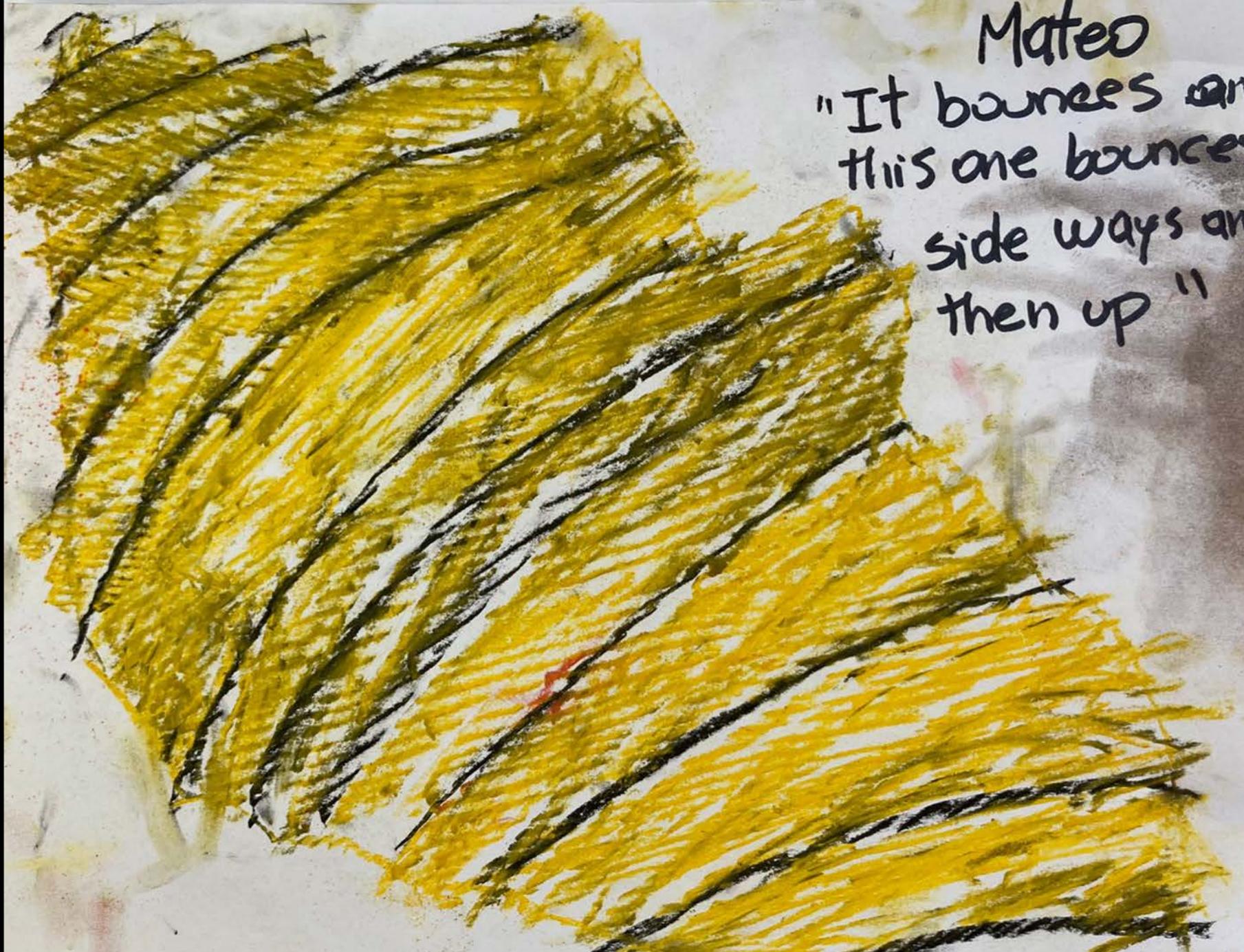
We invite the children to draw the movement of fire. Of course, this is challenging as it is difficult to capture any movement in drawing. We choose pastel as it is fluid and has the ability to move.



A red wax crayon drawing of a landscape. The scene features a winding path or road that leads through a valley towards a range of mountains in the background. The mountains are rendered with numerous short, parallel lines, giving them a textured appearance. The sky is filled with dense, overlapping scribbles, suggesting a cloudy or hazy atmosphere. The overall style is that of a child's artwork.

"IT rocks
side ways"

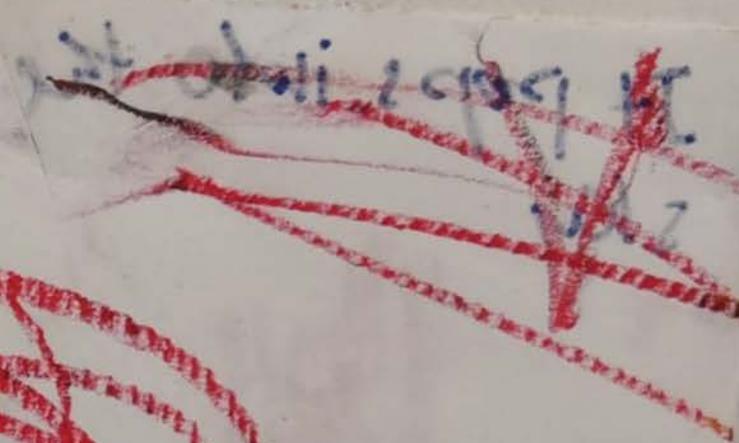
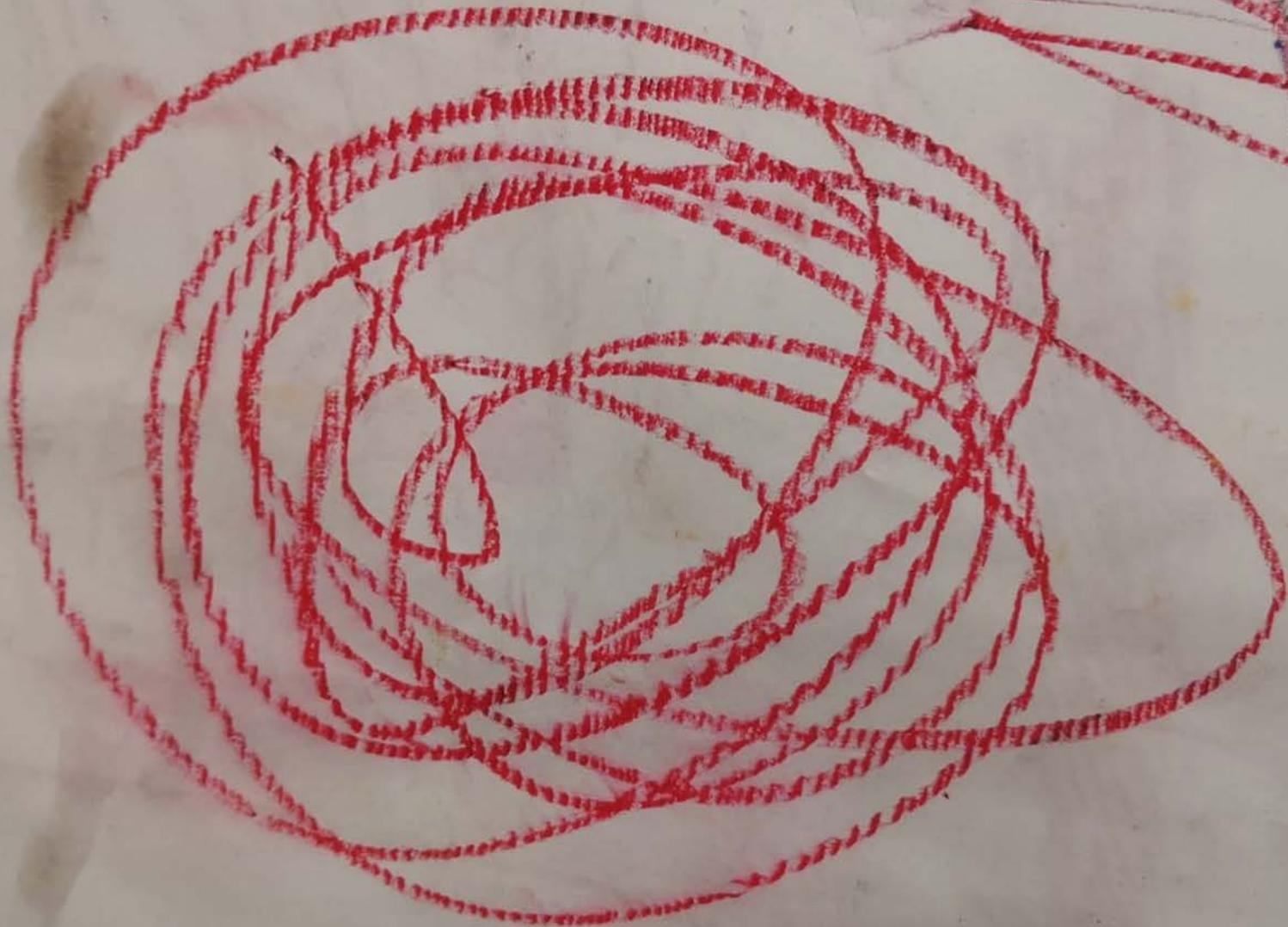
Lilah



Mateo

"It bounces and
this one bounces
side ways and
then up"

It makes some circles too



“it pops up to the sky and makes circles too” - Ada

Children show movement sometimes with large movements and sometimes with subtle, small movements. Here Owen is showing us how the fire goes up and down using only his index finger.

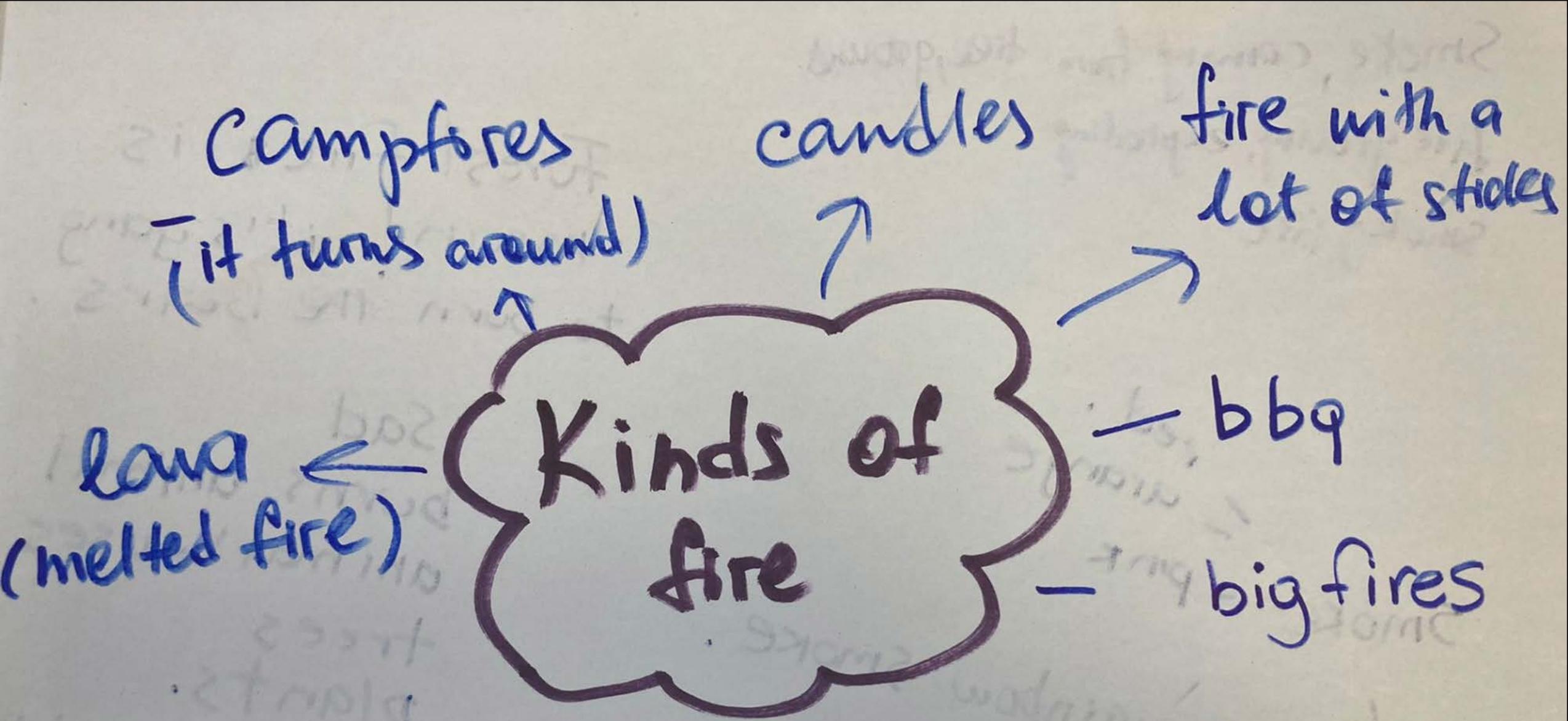




The movements described by the children are active, energetic and still a presentation of the chalk dust – a movement that always goes up and then comes down. We wonder what other forms of fire we can think with...



Brainstorming with the children...

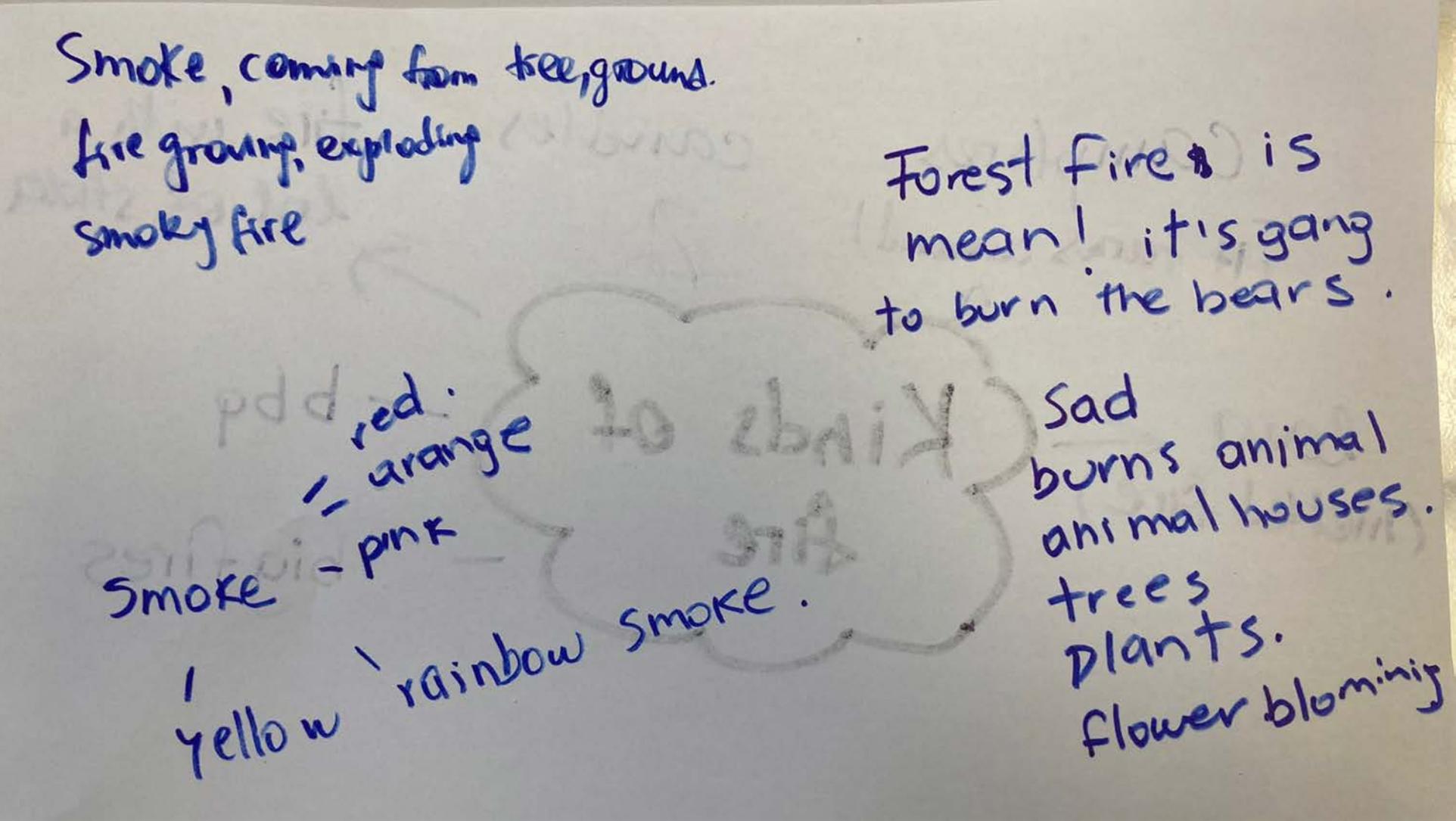


Thinking of the movements the children have been describing, we decide to explore the movement of forest wildfires.

- Going around in a circle
- Bouncing
- -Going up & down
- Rain fire



Wild forest fire
moves freely –
It is large,
Colourful,
mesmerizing –
It is also
“mean”,
destructive,
exploding



“Children Feel; Children Know” (L. Malaguzzi)
Thinking with the “diagnosis of our time” (P. Moss), we are considering our current struggles with global warming & vast Westcoast wild fires.
We recognize children’s capabilities to observe their world and our responsibility to listen and discuss.

An invitation in response to Austin's observation on wildfires: "It starts with one tree, and then goes to the next tree and then goes to the next tree"







Thinking with the movement of chalk dust and reflecting with the children's expressions of fire dust & fairy dust, we provide large amount of sand on the floor, with videos of wildfires playing in the background.



TERRANOVA

The reflection of the video and the falling sand represents an image of rain for children – fire, rain and rainbow clouds make their way into the conversation again:

“It’s raining”

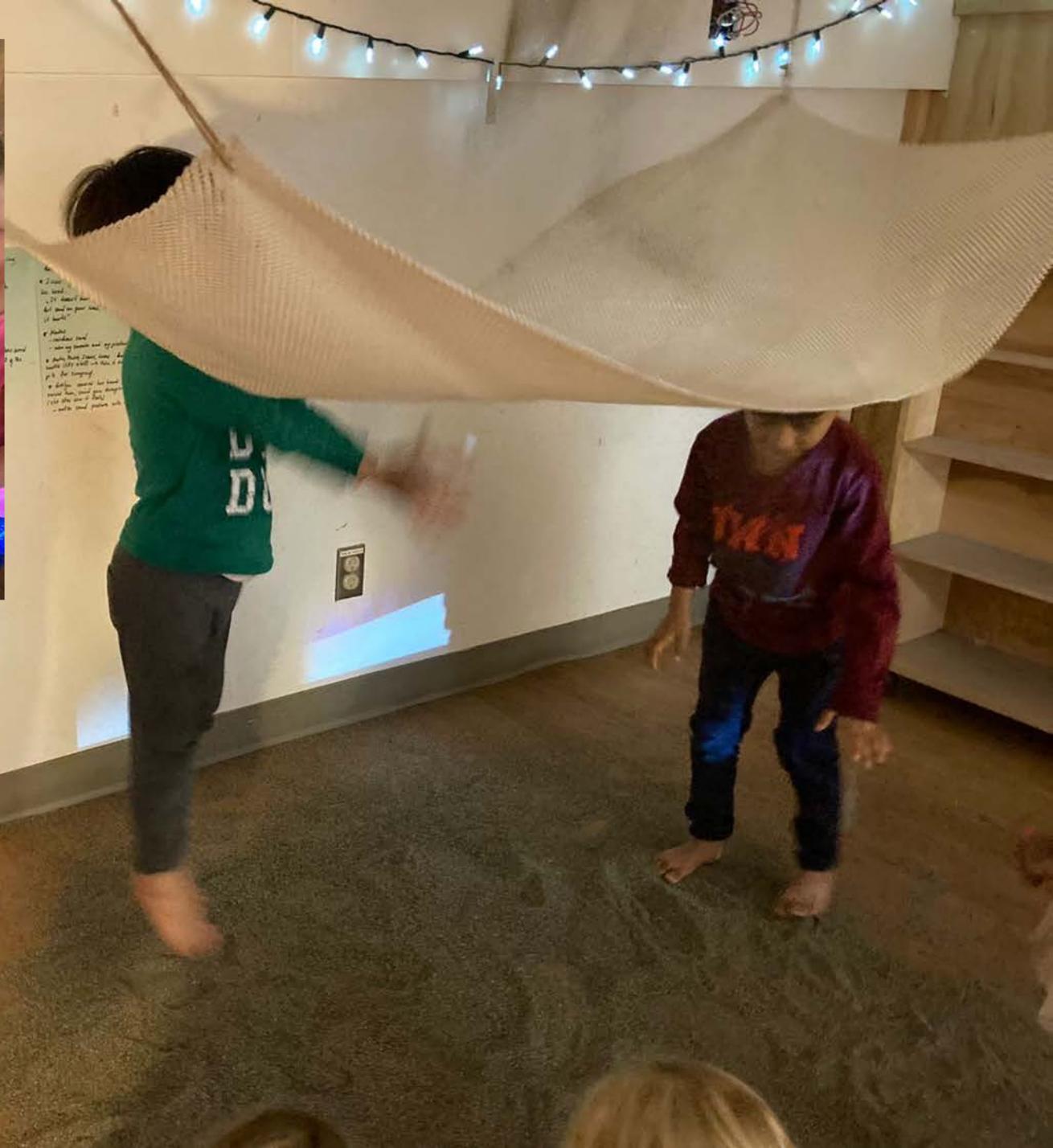
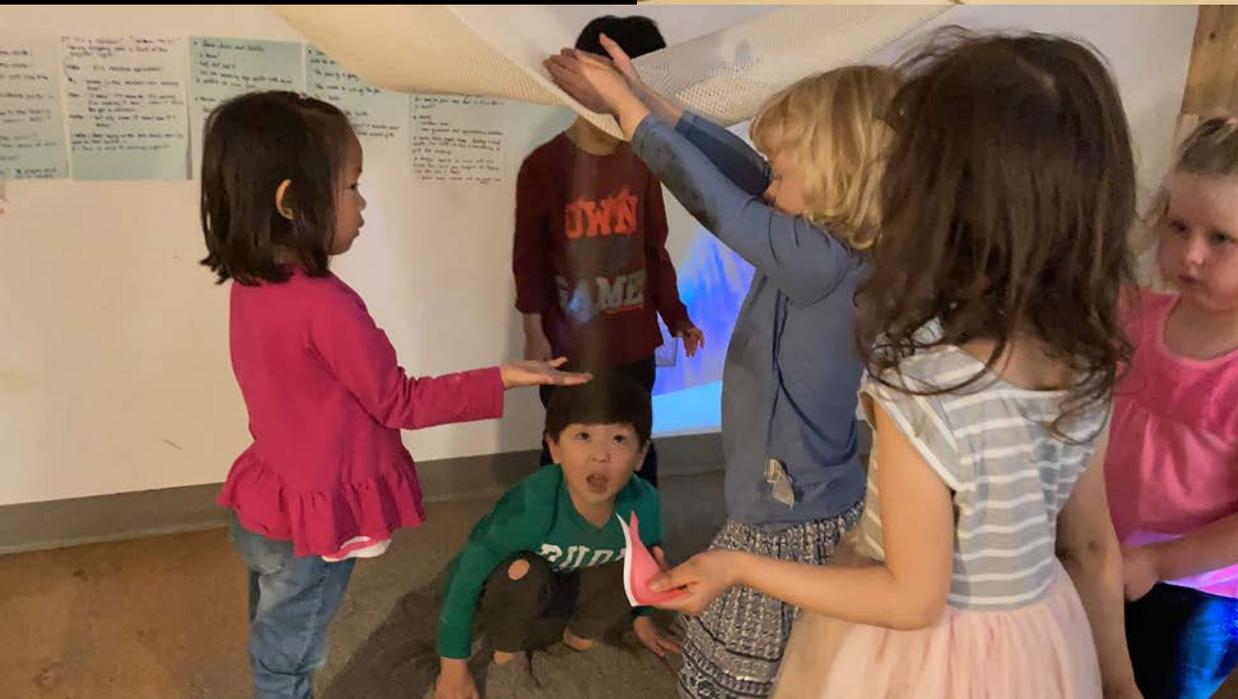
“It’s rainbow; rainbow rain”

“It’s rainbow sprinkles”

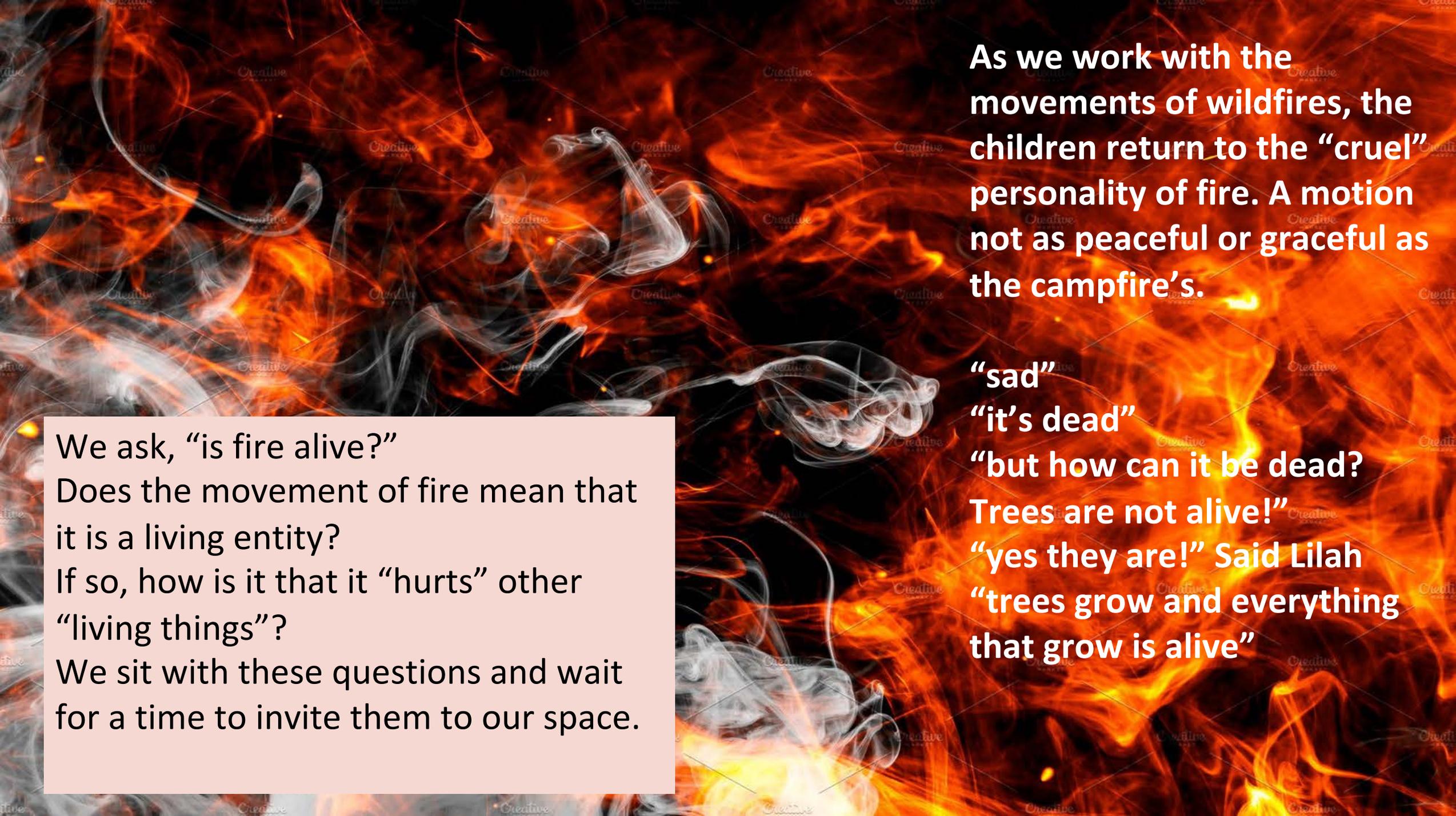
“I’m making it rain”

“This fire is in the cloud”

“Hmm, Maybe it is a rainbow cloud”



Children's ideas of "raining fire" and "fire clouds" weaves in and out of the play with different material



We ask, “is fire alive?”
Does the movement of fire mean that
it is a living entity?
If so, how is it that it “hurts” other
“living things”?
We sit with these questions and wait
for a time to invite them to our space.

As we work with the
movements of wildfires, the
children return to the “cruel”
personality of fire. A motion
not as peaceful or graceful as
the campfire’s.

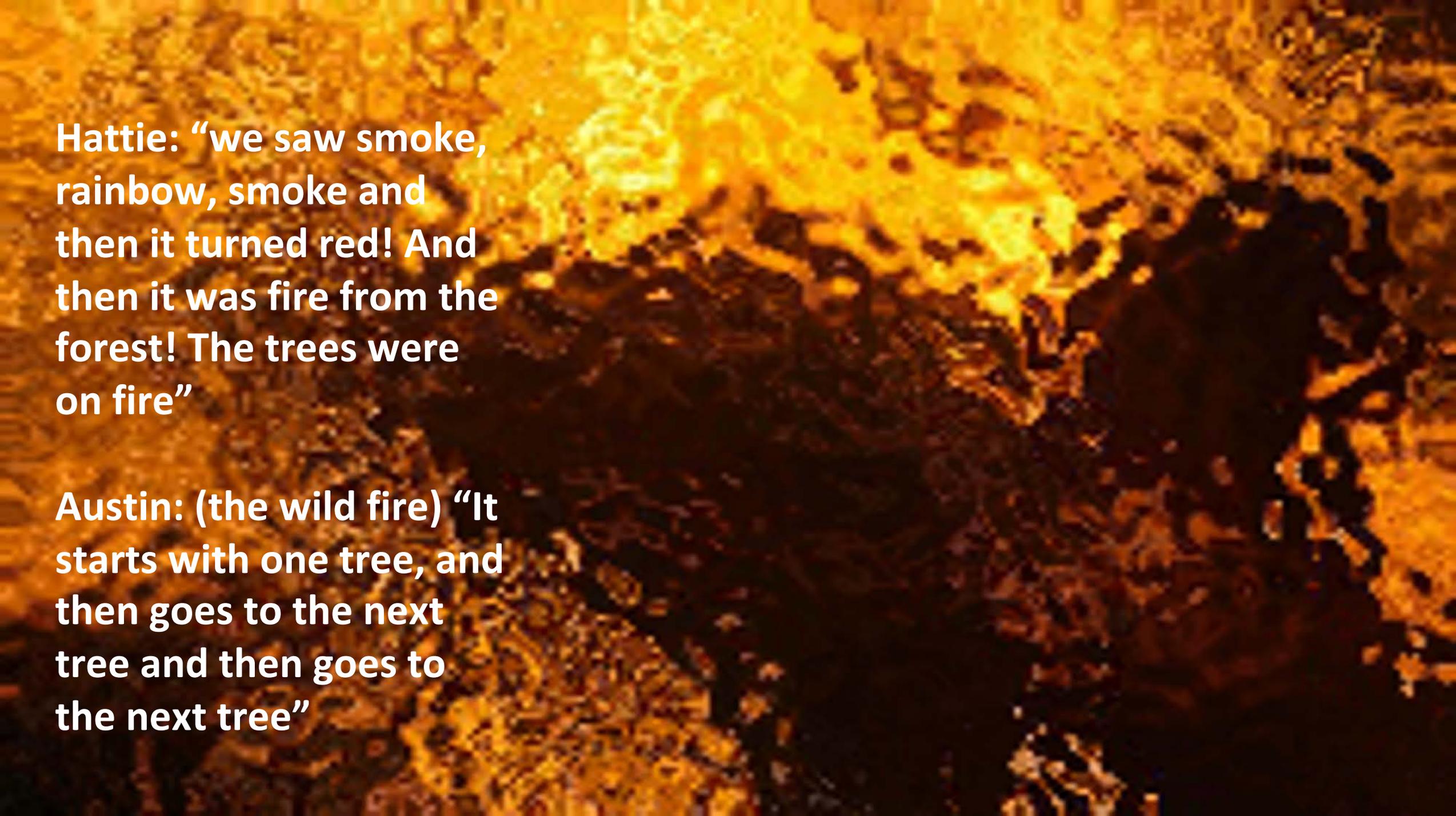
“sad”
“it’s dead”
“but how can it be dead?
Trees are not alive!”
“yes they are!” Said Lilah
“trees grow and everything
that grow is alive”

What makes something alive?

- “Are Trees alive”?
- “Yes! Everything that grows is alive! Like flowers, bushes, grass, rainbows, rain. Because it starts tiny and then grows bigger and faster and faster.”

This conversation stands out for us as the description given is very similar to previous descriptions given for forest fires





Hattie: “we saw smoke,
rainbow, smoke and
then it turned red! And
then it was fire from the
forest! The trees were
on fire”

Austin: (the wild fire) “It
starts with one tree, and
then goes to the next
tree and then goes to
the next tree”

No. People make it bigger. ~ Lucas

No. IT doesn't have feelings. ~ Jordan

No. I know it grows but I think it needs the wind and person or a tree to make it grow. - Elena

No. because it only starts because we light it up. - Emma

No, it wiggles but it doesn't mean it's alive. - Abi

IS FIRE
Alive?

Yes. I don't know why but it look like it's alive. ~ Mae

Yes. because it grows and floats away. - Hattie

Yes. because it moves! - Mateo

Yes! because it giggles and goes around and it grows to keep us warm. - Ada

Yes, because it goes up and then on the mountain and makes the trees burn. - Thomas.

Yes. Because once I went camping and got some sticks to make fire and we covered it when we were done and there was no more fire, ~ Hali but then it started again!

We listen to the children as they discuss whether fire is alive or not.

It is quite interesting to see how children think of movement, agency and growth as characteristics of being alive.

We hope to have the chance to test some of these thoughts in the next year.



And we continue to watch...
What we see is how the children's
expressions of movement of fire has
the same rhythm with fabric,
sand, dust and drawings & their
bodies.





A poetic motion entangled with beauty and destruction – hopping, bouncing, dancing, floating: raining down from “rainbow fire clouds”



**We are truly
thankful to our
Preschool children
for taking us into
the most magical
journey with
colours, fire and
movement.**

**With Love & Respect,
- The Preschool Team**