

# Fair-skinned Black Fulla

LINGO

I know what you think ay.  
She's dark-skinned.  
She's got brown eyes  
and a broad nose.  
She lives way out in red dirt country...

LIGHTS

Nah just gamin!  
See?  
I'm white.  
Obviously.  
No curly hair,  
no long skinny legs.  
Don't have the nose  
or the postcode.

Please don't measure my Aboriginality on my skin colour,  
and don't tell me I'm less of an Aboriginal woman than your stereotype.  
I had the privilege of growing up knowing of my Aboriginality,  
learning about my culture and my family's traditions.  
I went on walks with my aunties in the spring  
and learnt about women's business.

I was born in Parramatta Hospital.

On Dharug land.

My nation.

No one in my family has ever left Dharug country.

See, when my aunts were children

they didn't even know they were Aboriginal.

Nan didn't want people picking on them at school.

That was a long winter of loss.

When Nan was a young girl,

she was told she was Spanish;

"That's why you've got dark skin!"

One winter she ate eels from the Parramatta River

before she was taken to a place called La Perouse

and told not to look in the old man's eyes.

When her mother was a middle aged woman

she lived through the winter in Parramatta,

and took in ironing for the nuns

so her children could go to school.

She knew she was Aboriginal

but she didn't say anything.

She knew it meant danger for her children.

When her mum was an old woman  
she saw her language change  
and, in the winter, the Aboriginal Protection Board  
took away her land.  
Land that was handed down from generations.

When her mother was an old woman  
she smoked a clay pipe.  
She walked from East Creek to Parramatta in the spring  
to see the first steam train.  
She knew she was Aboriginal.

When her mum was a young girl  
she was the first girl to be put into a Native Institute.  
First in Parramatta  
and then in *Blacktown*.  
She topped everybody in a statewide examination,  
and married a convict one summer in St John's Church.  
On Australia Day.