

## WHITE

The girls from the reserve were big.  
They were often held back a year or two at school,  
so they seemed like giants: tall with powerful thighs  
and upper arms and rapid fists. We stayed clear of them.  
It wasn't that we were prejudiced like our parents.  
If they had lived on our street, we would have been friends.  
But they came from the reserve where none of us ever went.

One day after lunch, waiting in line for the school doors  
to open, I noticed one of the girls from the reserve  
grinding something beneath her foot. Leaning closer,  
I saw it was a small, coloured disk, the kind from  
the watercolour sets we had in our desks.  
She dropped one after another,  
red, blue, brown, yellow, orange, purple, ...  
bringing her heel down, slowly pulverising  
them into powder on the gray cement.  
When the doors finally opened, we filed in  
past the smeared rainbow on the ground.

When I got to my desk, I checked for my own paints.  
I opened the thin metal case. They were gone.  
I didn't complain to the teacher. I wasn't angry or hurt.  
I knew that all those colours were so carefully and  
completely crushed because I was White.