

A Selected Excerpt from Foreigner and the Realization of the Third Eye

The princesses on the television are white,
And the kids at school are white too,
When I tell them my dad is black they act surprised,
I'm surprised too.
I thought everyone had a black dad.

The hair models for *Super Cuts* are white,
The characters in my books are white too,
For the first two years I have no siblings,
For the first two years I don't remember much,
Most of it is blank, empty, absent.
I can't find a color to link to the feeling.
The experience is left white.

The pretty girls are white,
The handsome boys are white,
I straighten my hair and suck in the sides of my face in hopes that I will wake up as a white girl, but my hair stays wavy, my skin stays tan, my eyes stay crooked.
The teacher confuses me with the other colorful little girls and, for the first six years, we are all put in the same classes so we can defend one another from anyone who might find our race a source of ridicule.

By the end of middle school I stop wanting to be a white girl entirely.
They are banal and unoriginal in my eyes,
I find friends who are unique and spectacular, friends who don't define themselves by race,
And I realize that these people, who were never interesting to me before, are exciting and worthwhile human beings.
And then, slowly, I realize that white is much more a state of mind than a color of one's skin.