

## **Molly Craig**

By Linda Christensen

Write that I grew up in Jigalong  
With my mother and grandmother.  
Say that it was my home,  
No there weren't walls,  
And no there weren't beds,  
And yes, we were poor,  
But when did love come in units  
Counted up in dollar bills?  
When did family become something you could count  
Instead of something you could count on?

Tell them that I learned to read animal tracks,  
Filter water from roots in a desert, cook over an open fire,  
And find my spirit bird  
Before most kids learn to read words.  
And yet, Mr. Devil calls me uneducated.

He wants to teach me to sweep, empty buckets,  
Wring water from white people's sheets.

Tell them instead of beating and shaming me  
For my color, my dirty hair, my language,  
My mother taught me through praise,  
"Good tracker," she said.  
"You brought us a fat one."

When you write my story, tell Mr. Devil that my mother's grief  
Could not be counted, not tallied up in his books,  
My mother's grief strummed along 1200 miles of rabbit proof fence  
And hummed me home.

Say that I wasn't half anything,  
Not half caste, not half black, not half white,  
Yes, when you tell my story,  
Say that when I'm home,  
I'm whole.