

# Loss of innocence

Mabel Gibson

i am 8 years old. i lay with my head on my mother's lap while we swing on the love seat in the front of our property. the day is February 13 in the year 2008, it is around 10 in the morning. it is a Wednesday and although i have been up for hours i'm not going to school. i look up at the sky, so blue, i look into my mother's eyes, it's almost like i am still looking into the sky . same colour. same aliveness. surrounding our front porch are endless trees, my siblings and i spend hours exploring our own private jungle. we have so much freedom. we are so lucky. i grab my mum's hand and trace over the wrinkles with my finger. 'Mum, why am i not at school today?' i am so innocent, i know nothing of the hardships my people before me faced, i know nothing of the opportunities my people created for me through years of suffering and trauma. 'remember this morning, we watched Kevin make a speech?' i think back to 9 am, never in my life had i seen a tear roll down my dad's cheek and although i don't know what heartbreak feels like, it broke my heart watching my dad cry , were they tears of sadness or joy? 'yes, i remember, Mum, it was only an hour ago,' i giggle. 'well, when Pop was only a year older than you he was stolen from his parents.' i do not know what that means, the concept of being stolen from your own family seems unreal, even at 8 years old  
i know how wrong it is. 'Kevin was saying sorry for taking him away.' i look back up at the sky, so blue, but not the same as before. it will never be the same as before.

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Mabel Gibson is a youth Yamatji writer from Kinjarling/Albany. She has published with Magabala Books, Night Parrot Press and has sat on panels at various writers festivals. She hopes to one day become a publisher and provide opportunities for other First Nations writers.