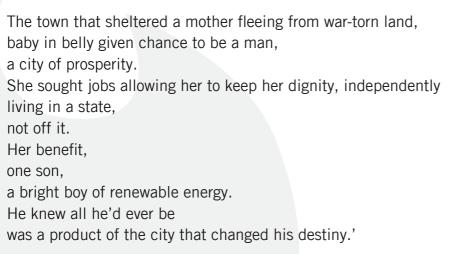
BEING BRITISH

By Deanna Rodger

I always get asked, 'Where do you come from?' My repeated reply is 'I ondon.



'OK,'
they say,
'but what country?'
I breathe deeply,

swallowing sarcastic syllables, and exhale, 'Great Britain. The island throned in seas that channelled safety. She carried men to defend countrysides scattered with towns full of factories. The curator of colonies voiced view to keep view, exploit used to heavily recruit natural warlikes to fight aggressively, with strength and bravery. Fifty-two thousand casualties, Ghurkhas' support over two world wars. Nearly half a million fought for Great Britain.' I'm teasing them,

because although it's not a lie I know it's not the desired response



and so am not surprised when they reply, 'Where are your parents from?'

See, I can't hide pigment skin within words, whether fact or fiction.

So I tell them
I'm a product of miscegenation.

That my parents' parents are from Jamaica and Scotland.

Raised in England,
they found love and made life in London
to birth and breed a British girl.

So while I'm an addict for hard food,
I fiend for the smell of 'eggs an' ba'on' in the morning,
I'm a sucker for a cuppa
and I'll batter a fish and chips in less than fifteen minutes.
I was raised by the church and educated by EastEnders.
Friday nights of teenage life were spent going on drink benders.
I can't pretend, 'cause
all I know is GB
and I suppose on paper I could quite possibly read as an ideal recruit in the BNP,
wear my balaclava too high so my eyes can't see
the route of my journey to the RWB,
ticket's the qualifications on my CRB,
five for hate crimes would get me VIP.

But a face-to-face interview would refuse my application on the grounds that those I walk on are not my birthright nation, profile is proof of racial integration, defies the silent slogan of skin-based segregation and as the tick box of White/Caribbean is crossed my rights are wrong and I should politely get lost.

Pack bags, try to find where I belong. But before I'm forced to leave I'll leave thoughts to ponder on. Where do you, your parents And your ancestors come from.

