

What's in the Skin?

Manpreet Kaur

A beautiful white bird
 Scanning the night sky
 Whispered in my ear
 If born from the garden of life
 Coming in motley shades
 And forms
 I wonder
 What's in the skin?

Perplexed I
 Pondered for a while
 Gazing at the night sky
 Whispered back
 It's just a colour that never fades
 An identity one carries till the last breath
 A colour without choice
 What's in the skin?

Better still
 The carefree white bird muttered
 I am uncertain
 What's in the skin?

Unlike the incessant flow of the river
 Crossed once
 Its path wavers
 This, my dear white bird
 Is constant
 Time abound
 Ageless
 Neuter and static

Dithering between the two thoughts
 A puzzled white bird
 Now mist in its eyes
 Whispered again
 I hear they say
 There still is a crave for perfect perfection
 Like lighter over brown for centuries
 However, tanned over pigment free in today's age and time
 Simply putting it
 Is it coloured over white or otherwise?

Nah, I affirmed
 It's only in the mind
 For my skin is who I am
 I am coloured
 So be it!
 I am different
 But no less than the other
 Fluid maybe my being
 Nonetheless, I am a formless soul
 With crimson like blood our only commonality
 Only my skin is coloured
 That is
 What's in the skin?

Better still
 The loving white bird
 Unconvinced whispered in a far lower tone
 What's in the skin?

Cognizant now I knew
 Where this white bird was coming from
 I whispered
 Beneath this layer my dearest
 Is a labyrinth like a 'waka' (root)
 Manoeuvring its route
 Amidst myriad creatures
 Of countless form
 What's in the skin anyway?

The gullible white bird
 Came closer to me
 Touching my bare skin
 Feeling its smoothness
 Approving its texture
 For he sees my soul over my skin
 Better still
 Perusing how coloured I was
 With that one stroke of a touch
 I gazed back whispering
 What's in the skin?

I nodded with buoyancy
 My skin is not me
 It's a beautiful garment
 In it I am clad
 I am more than what the ordinary eyes can see
 For he who feels the real me
 Sees and judges me not
 With that of my skin
 But beyond the surface
 The superficial outer layer
 Like the outer world
 In which this body is trapped
 This skin is a mere wrapping for my flash and soul

The white bird now in admiration
 Adoration and affirmation
 Whispered still
 What's in the skin?

Reaffirming the multiple parallels
 Jostling in the innocent mind
 I whispered once more
 As I age
 Only the red from my cheeks will vanish
 The folds begin to unfold
 The colour of my skin thickens
 But only I like many other coloured skins around will remain true to our
 colours

The rest that the eyes see
 My friend
 Will fade with time
 As a swash kissing the shores
 Only to return to its vastness
 With its backwash

 Redeemed in my island gallant
 I whispered to my dear white bird
 Today,
 I stare into my own reflection
 Admiring my coloured complexion
 And sigh!
 What's in the skin?
 I am perfect perfection
 Period.

Author:

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