

Mixed Face

I struggle to say I'm black
because they're not quite sure I'm that.
I know that I'm brown too
at least that's what their eyes and my ears are used to.
But you see my nan
her white skin burns and will never catch a tan.
They swoop in and tell me "I'm this and you're that"
and have always said it like a fact.
Well, that's that.

You see my granddad is black
grew up nomadic in fact.
'Somalian man in Edinburgh 1960', reports of a new beastie.
For the Livingston locals, "what a panic's in thy breastie!"
Local herself, my nan forms a bond.
Sooner or later, they've grown fond
of the "other"
from which comes my mother.

My appa,
West London lad in a lab coat.
Told us tales of Appama and Appapa
arriving on a banana boat.
Suit in the day sarong in the night,
funny that, the neighbours down south too got a fright.
National Front alright. They had to understand
sarees from Jaffna now draped in Norwich sand.
Before school it was seeni sambal on toast,
whilst listening to *The Jam*.
Then hopping on the bus with Ajay, Jakub and Sam.
That is Britain. They just misunderstand.

My mixed face is dressed in stories,
not tabloids of hate,
but of beauty and glory.
Trust in you and me
or listen to what they say on TV.
But,
when you look at my face
that is what you should see.