

The bathroom mirror affirmed the innocence,  
of my ignorance.

The only color a child should see,  
is reflected in a maple tree of fall  
or the coral and pastel hues of roses in spring.

But on my name's day, my friend said,  
"Let's go to the movies, we'll have ice-cream on the way."  
A soft concoction of chocolate and vanilla swirl,  
the sweetness blended and inseparable,  
like we once were  
our goodness to be soon consumed.

My first movie.

He said that he would pay,  
because he had a little but I had less.  
You see—my friend was sparrow-rich,  
and I was church-mouse poor.

101 Dalmatians was in town.  
It was exciting to be in line.

And then a boy my size,  
Lassie's Timmy came to mind.  
Who like a lion, snarled and roared.  
He bore his teeth and spat at me  
because I was brown and he was not,  
he spat at me and cursed my friend,  
because he was white and I was not.

With his father's voice—  
he changed my name to Spic.

He caused the candles of my cake to die,  
the maple leaves to fall and roses fade.

Then I saw the world in painful clarity  
Like magnets in reverse polarity  
my color repels and casts away.

Back then, I thought I was the same,  
that one boy brown and one boy white were all alike.  
That one and one was one,  
a blended concoction of chocolate and vanilla swirl,  
the sweetness mingled and inseparable.

But what I learned when I turned nine—  
is they were white,  
and I was not,  
that one boy brown and one boy white were not alike.  
That blended and inseparable goodness  
was consumed like tissue on a fire,  
the day my innocence, lay on the funeral pyre.