

to be anything in this world, you need to get a white person to like you.

—scaachi koul

white dreams

i have white dreams
billboards magazines
mighty praise accolades
top 10 lists and top 10 hits

so i climb dodge boulders
earn blisters but even
the top of the mountain
is white

i have a white boy i top
i dream on his long body
as his past bodies have long
built upon mine but when i cum

on the dip in his spine
even the colour of my pleasure
is white. body you betray me
the only brown i make

for sewer but for him
for him my brown body
makes white makes nice
if my cum was brown

would he still eat it? from my core
i seek courage
but even my bones
are white

is it my skin that betrays
this skeleton? i pray
for answers for my dreams
hunched back dim light

blue ink blank paper knelt over
wept over now i grasp why thirty-four
years of praying through writing
awoke no god

even
this page
is white
so i protest this page

mask it with words
words about being brown
about my mother
my motherland

but even these words
have white
dreams billboards magazines
crystal trophies

because what are words
without dreams
and what is a dream
if it is not white?

indian

podium mic on
remind them
this land is not ours
heads nod hands clap
feet fixed
are you even in the room?

once my mother accidentally drove near a reserve
the only time i have seen her afraid hit gas pedal
strange to be indian and the sound of car locks
to be synonymous with *indians*

is acknowledgement enough?
i acknowledge i stole this
but i am keeping it social justice
or social performance
what would it mean to digest you and yours and
blood and home and land and minerals and trees and dignities and legacies
to really honour no
show gratitude no
word for partaking in violence in progress

last year baltimore intersection black man
approaches once again a finger reaches for car
lock except this time the finger
is mine.

amiskwacîwâskahikan

so preoccupied
with my own
displacement
didn't notice
i was displacing

you

gave myself
a white name
adam in place of
divek civic ribbit
didn't bother to learn

yours.

fair

for shamik

your second mother
when you had half a father
my arm ever wrapped around your shoulder
rolled macaroni burritos for your dinner
knock knock jokes for your laughter

but when they asked you
why are you so much darker
than your brother called you the n word
lingered for an answer
all i did was bask.

talc

go get it
under bathroom sink rusted pipes
 behind vaseline body cream
beside evergreen hair oil
 avon talcum powder turn the lid
smell forest and future
 offer it to my mother she snows
my face saffrons my lips
 her revlon *just for special events*
in my finest i was white
 and i was woman.

antaryami

he passes by doesn't notice
your palms pushed together your palms

wiping cement to collect dust dirt
he stepped on to wipe over your face

you used to sing *he is the indweller
of my heart* you used to say

he likes the white followers more
i was ten and attentive

if this is true at least i'm canadian
a psyche so trampled

to accept that even our guru
our god prefers white over us.

even this stage

voted *most annoying voice* in junior high
i knew you meant most faggot voice
even when the yearbook committee changed
the category to *most unique voice* also voted

most talented singer most talented faggot
i'll take it earned it singing madonna disney
at assemblies *a whole new world*
of pop requires a song to be sing-alongable

if you can't sing with me like me
the song doesn't echo has no value
what if i don't sound like you? a voice
molded by ragas and my mother's

later roused by r&b riffs and emotion
the closest semblance on radio to indian
classical devotion whitney taught me
a new way to pray but when i open

my mouth i'm told *restraint sing less*
fewer notes file this advice alongside other
efforts to render my voice pleasing
palpable reduce inflection lower pitch

what if i don't sound like you? what if
i don't look like you? bleached my hair
learned guitar covered pearl jam u2
listeners still say *eastern influences*

reviews say vocals are *irritating acquired taste*
most annoying less fewer restrain reduce lower
sometimes i forget that i know
how to sing.

raji

you have a twin worst thing to tell a queen
his name is raji i despise him already
who? i ask avert my eyes
i guess *he is brown and tall*
no one says *and queer*
no one needs to

i am told of my twin often with a snicker a secret
joke on both of us
hope we never meet

i recognize my twin across the central academic building hallway
so gangly his wrists scrape the floor giraffe neck
rusty streaks in his mushroom haircut
we pretend not to notice each other
betrayed by the presence
of the other

he knows the precise strain and witchery to refashion
deviance flamboyancy as extraordinary
why would he take
this away from me?

so accustomed to being token
his arrival obsoleted me

two weeks later i'm told *by the way raji can't stand you*
two brown faggots distantly loathing each other
because how else can we liberate the hurt
from being brown and queer in a dirt city
that hates us so hard
that even one word *twin*
tells us that there isn't enough space
for both

dear raji sorry for not recognizing you as my brother
admiring you as my sister.

birth certificate says m

man became punctuation in the nineties
man seizing the last word
how's it going man

my brother an ambassador of this trend
i asked him not to *man* with me
what's your problem man

forever forgiven under front of sibling rivalry
but for one fight my remorse endures
chill man

thick cordless phone in my hand
beat his face with it
how many times have i told you i am not a man

beat

don't

beat

fucking

beat

call me

beat

man

his face spilling
fear and somehow
love.

cycle of violence

without seeing a white cock i knew
my teenage penis was too dark
 no patch of my brown body is safe
from white sovereignty not even between my legs

without means to under my over colour
i warned potential lovers:
 i nicknamed it "oprah"
shifting shame into a joke about a black woman.