



Justen

Educational Talent Search  
York Technical College, SC  
Category: Creative Writing

**“My Shades of Brown”**

My skin is brown and hers is too  
My family’s skin is not the same hue  
Not black and cold like genuine leather  
But brown and warm like a wren’s feather

Dark like tree bark on an autumn day  
Warm like molasses, not dull ashy gray  
Full of history passed down through generations  
Not like any other color, a special creation

With dark and light spots of ebony cream  
The result of oppression then "I Have A Dream"  
My skin is sun-and-chocolate-kissed  
All light white pigments have been dismissed

A dark mocha foundation is all that remains  
A spoonful of brown sugar every summer it gains  
With oak and mahogany accents of blessed harmony  
Dark ebony and light caramels make me in matrimony

My eyes are black espresso beans with coffee grain cores  
My face a mud mask of mystery and lore  
My limbs are short, thick pretzel sticks  
My torso solid, the color of weatherworn bricks

My unusual color is the product of my contrasted roots  
My father's family is dark as chimney chutes  
My mother's side a mix of light tans to dark topes  
An odd combination of shackles and ropes

That's why my skin is infinite shades of brown  
A combination of sand and dark coffee grounds  
What color am I? I sometimes wonder  
A million shades of beautiful, the perfect blunder

**Works Cited Photograph taken by Justen**