New skin

by Steven J. Kolbe

Have I told you about the summer I got athlete's foot so bad my tiny five-year-old feet turned into solid scales? I had to walk like a giant lizard, placing each toe down carefully as to not shed. This was when we were still living in Florida, and so my mom called me her *lil' gator* for the better part of July.

Each evening she would prepare a small tub of water that had been treated with some sort of medicinal talcum powder. (I never thanked her.) For ten minutes I would have to sit perfectly still on the edge of her bed, thinking of Road Runner and the Flash and wishing I could do anything but sit there with my feet in warm, foamy water.

I felt like my skin had always been like that--scaly and red--and that it would be like that forever.

After several weeks, the powder finally kicked in and my toes returned to little boy toes instead of lil' gator ones. My new toes were impossibly more supple and yet impossible to crack. And, after a few days, I completely forgot that they had ever been different than soft, white flesh.

Is that how it will be when he pours that sacramental water over my head? Will this old skin, scarred and hardened by sin, slough away to make way for something softer but impossibly more strong?

You say that it will not change everything—but O how I wish that it would!

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