

# His Laugh is My Yellow (or explaining skin color to a six-year-old boy)

*by Yasmin Elaine Waring*

Max is the color of burnt caramelized sugar  
the sweet crust that decorates our cracked enameled pots.

He pinches his skin between pudgy fingers  
looking for a loose lip I think  
that can be bent and peeled back  
like sticky laminate sheets  
to reveal something else.

A little girl in his class  
licked his cheek to see  
if it, if he tasted of chocolate  
he told me once  
long after the fact.

She was the color of milk foam  
that floats atop fancy coffee drinks.

I wondered whether to complain.  
No biting, hitting or kicking is the rule.  
But what of sweet licks?

When his eyes ask I say  
brown is what happens when freckles collide.  
It is the beginning and the end of the rainbow.  
It is the earthy scent of my sometimes-too-tight hugs

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and the weight of my kiss on his closed eyelids.

He smiles with pink and brown gums seeding new teeth.  
He licks my face and laughs.

His laugh is my yellow  
I tell him  
and the answer is good enough  
for now.

4/7/11

