

A POEM OF VITILIGO, COURAGE & HOPE

Beyond the Colour of My Skin

An illustrated reflection

It started with a little patch,
A lighter shade upon my hand,
A silent change without a sound,
A language I could not understand.

I watched it grow, I watched it spread,
And wondered what the days would bring.
Would I still be the person I was,
If time should steal my colouring?

The mirror slowly changed its role,
From trusted friend to silent foe;
I learnt to hide beneath my sleeves
The things I feared the world might know.



The whispers hurt, the glances burned,
The questions came from everywhere.
Some stepped away, afraid to touch,
As though my skin held danger there.

They spoke of curses, sins and food,
Of punishment for deeds unknown.
And every myth they passed along
Made me feel a little more alone.

But I am not a curse fulfilled,
Nor someone you should fear to touch.
You cannot catch what colours me,
And kindness does not cost that much.

Beneath these patches, cells have changed,
My own defences turned astray;
The cells that give my skin its shade
Are lost as pigment fades away.

Yet nothing in my heart has changed,
My dreams have not diminished too.
The hands that bear these islands white
Can build and heal and comfort you.

But who can count the unseen wounds,
The invitations turned away,
The photographs I chose to miss,
The tears I hid throughout the day?

The fear of love that might be lost,
Of interviews and judging eyes,
The endless search for remedies,
The costly promises built on lies.



Yet science has not stood aside,
And hope is more than wishful thought.
With creams and light and newer drugs,
New paths to healing are being sought.

For some, the colour may return,
For others, change is painfully slow.
No treatment makes a promise sure,
But knowledge gives us room to hope.

And should my colour not return,
Must happiness elude me still?
Must I postpone the life I love
Until my skin obeys my will?

I need not wait to fall in love,
To chase a dream, to dance, to sing;
My skin need not be uniform
For life to offer everything.

Acceptance does not mean defeat,
Nor treatment mean I lack self-worth.
I have as much a right as you
To walk with pride upon this earth.



So teach your children not to stare,
But more than that, to understand;
That friendship knows no shade of skin,
And love begins with an outstretched hand.

Perhaps the world needs healing too,
From prejudice it holds within;
For there are deeper flaws in hearts
Than any patch upon my skin.

I am a canvas still unfolding,
A story neither lost nor done.
My shades may change, my spirit need not;
I have my place beneath the sun.

And when you meet me, look beyond
The lighter patches that you see.
For vitiligo is a part of my story,
But it will never be the whole of me.

A Message from the Author

Vitiligo changes the colour of the skin, but its effects often reach far deeper. Behind every patch may lie a story of uncertainty, anxiety, rejection or silent suffering.

Over the years, I have come to appreciate that treating vitiligo involves far more than restoring pigment. It means restoring confidence, offering hope, challenging misconceptions and reminding every patient of their inherent worth.

I wrote this poem for everyone living with vitiligo, and for those who share their journey.

Your skin may change, but your worth never does.

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www.vitiligosociety.co.za