Where I'm From

In the poem below, Melanie Poonai, a schoolgirl from Harrow, reflects on her identity, and all the factors that have helped shape who she is.

I am from a life filled with colour,
From the chocolate brown that is my skin.
I am from the sunshine yellow of my mother’s laugh,
From the red and white of my brother’s favourite football shirt.

I am from the crisp new white pages of a book,
From the miserable grey of the street I live on.
I am from green, pink and yellow; My garden in summer filled with flowers,
From the terrifying black of the nightmares that haunt me.

I am from the ginger orange of my buried cat,
From the blue and gold of my ever-short school tie.
I am from the dark oak of my grandmother’s coffin,
From the golden “Aum” pendant around my neck.

I am from every pink scar etched into my body,
From the red, orange and brown of a hot curry.
I am from every identical colour of the twins I love,
From the blue and green of a hospital ward.

I am from all that has happened,
And all that will be.¹