

MUSINGS

And Stigma Followed Me Everywhere

NITA MISHRA

Stigma followed
To the fair city of Dublin

Dark skinned, exotic, high caste-ness
accented English,
a decade back
Dubliners looked in awe
Ah the contradiction of the color with the language
dark yet “could speak” English
Knowledge of the words
in poetry and prose
in essays and articles, papers in academia

The suspicions followed
the men couldn't resist
The wives of the “Scholarly” were wary
Is she or is she not?
Every gaze followed
her “exoticness”

Peeling layers of the self
of doubts
hemming and hawing
in foreign settings
in attempts to comprehend
the grey world of the white man
innocence ripped off once again
in rooms where discourses on rights, justice,
climate, gender, and otherwise were held
the fire extinguished

Hypatia vol. 33, no. 3 (Summer 2018) © by Hypatia, Inc.

fear crept back
settled in the heart
hiding

and yet again
in the hiding, then
Stigma followed...

This time round
I wrapped it around
Stigma was I
and I was Stigma

Stigma ceased to follow