

Ranya Merchant,  
An Arabic first name,  
An English last name,  
How did this happen?  
My mom is to blame

Parents born in Bombay,  
But neither wanted to stay,  
In search of the American Dream,  
Their eyes agleam

So where does that leave me?  
On a cold December morn,  
In New Hampshire, I was born,  
This brown-skinned queen,  
Grew into a teen

A dancer, sailor, writer, and more,  
A good Indian daughter with expectations galore,  
Not allowed to be bad at math,  
Not a low grade in sight,  
The answer to my questions is always “because we’re not white”

My life is full of colors from the clothes to the food,  
There’s an outfit and dish for each of my moods,  
Eid or Diwali,  
Festivities surround,  
And to my culture, I am proudly bound

I am not confused with my duality,  
I wear it with pride,  
It’s part of my reality

I am an American,  
But I’m an Indian too,  
My spaghetti has *garam masala*  
My dance has *thumkas*  
To get a taste of my life, you should borrow my *jhumkas*

*Garam Masala* - An Indian spice

*Jhumkas* - Traditional Indian earrings

*Thumkas* - An Indian dance move