



Skin, Inc.: Identity Repair Poems

Thomas Sayers Ellis

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The ambitious, combative, and spot-on new poetry book by Thomas Sayers Ellis, author of the award-winning *The Maverick Room*

*Naturally, this will scare
the civil rights out of some
and, for a mad-moment, empower
a great many wrong-cultured others.
?from "The Return of Colored Only"*

Skin, Inc. is Thomas Sayers Ellis's big, ambitious argument in sound and image for an America whose identity is in need of repair. In lyric sequences and with his own photographs, Ellis traverses the African American and American literary landscapes?along the way adding race fearlessness to past and present literary styles and themes, and perform-a-forming tributes for the Godfather of Soul, James Brown; the King of Pop, Michael Jackson; and the election of President Barack Obama. Part manifesto, part identity repair kit, part plea for poetic wholeness, this collection worries and self-defends, eulogizes and casts a vote, raises a fist and, often, an intimidating song. One sequence is written as a sonic/ visual diagram of pronouns and vowels; another quotes from editors' rejections of his own poetry included in the book; another poem, "Race Change Operation," begins: "When I awake I will be white, the color of law." Skin, Inc. is the latest work by one of the most audacious and provocative poets now writing.

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