Late Diagnosis Starting with a Tweet

Château Cadet-Bon, France 2021

Trauma & astrology don't explain everything but I've got PTSD & ADHD & on a thirteenth Friday in June halfway through the seventies, third planet in retrograde, I guess I was born to learn in reverse. A calendared planetary curse to pay the wrong kind of attention—a genius of distraction. Or,

a poet, extrasensory, human. My chaos is more glitter than concrete, more confetti than anything solid or obedient to shape. Where do thoughts fly? Associative leaps, when I knew what to call them, felt like home, like wings. It makes sense to live in the air, to refuse to live a life of almosts but keep satisfaction impossible, my brightest failures the slow sips of wine not yet aged to peak. Open another, try again.

The bells in Bordeaux ring at 19h04 a full minute the Wednesday after I've learned appellations, classifications, varietals, to smell & check color & swirl before I sip through my teeth. I dive into limestone & clay in Saint Émilion, facts of corporate takeovers of designations in ancient once-familied hills, December vines bare against late morning fog that burns away to slate blue by noon. I know the difference between ease & complexity means knowing their concomitance. Rejection sensitivity & hyperfocus could blend into the wine & clay of difficult magic—I savor a 2015 Grand Cru Classé & later, try the year's second as unfortunate detour. The word disorder draws negative attention but deficit means less lack than letting life hollow you out because someone else or a whole culture said to—Said try harder. Said not enough or too much.

I could die too early, statistics say, from the wreckage lack of care could make of any mind. I climb cobblestone street heights where our guide tells us shit first rolled downhill. Now it's on my winter boots, an ancient limning I'll bring home as if I need more. He says Girondins & I think of Girona—another avenue I'll familiar-web myself into. Certain brains wander limbic, led by feeling, flight, light, surrender to love, curiosity or nothing but speed, pleasure—Formula 1 & richer, bolder, older reds I adore for a reason. I can't always follow instructions but know to rectify mistakes. I believe it's less forgiveness than allowance. Less madness & more the damage of false assumptions, less quirk & more dopaminic need & neurological pattern in infinite exploding pieces & I'm explaining again. I might or might not learn when to quit & how, according to taste & circumstance, holding close what took time & art & an earth of chance to make.

Khadijah Queen

This broadside was designed by Sarah Gzemski for the University of Arizona Poetry Center as part of the Poetry Coalition's March 2022 programming on the theme “The future lives in our bodies: Poetry & Disability Justice.”