

Full- Time Job

After a 20 minute vivisection of everything
I say, you finally stop trying to
find a lie in my diagnosis.

I'm going to explain myself, and what
you don't understand about
my disabled body.

This is for me, not for you.

But let me ask one thing:

can I share my hate with you,
and will I be okay afterward?

Caring for my body is a full-time job,
one without benefits, paid breaks or
any policies for overtime.

I desperately want to shout:

"I'm done. That's it, I quit."

More than anything I want to be
free of this work.

I know I never can be.

Because I've done everything right for so long,
no smoking, no drinking, no pushing
past my limits, not one appointment missed,
always using my cane.

So, surely, this should mean I'm better now.

I should be able to finally accomplish
chores
cooking

going outside more than once a week.

There is a version of me that can
go to the shops when we run out of squash,
can attend every show I want to see,
can meander for hours through town
while we talk shit about people we barely know.
That version is better,
but out of reach.

It's a special kind of mourning when
you discover, too late, that your
body has been slowly breaking
and you can no longer jump, run or
even stand like you once could.
I want nothing more than to learn
what it is to dance again.
I've had so much taken from me.

My body has made itself
into an archive of loss.

Do you expect me to reconcile that?

Do you expect me to hold love
for myself, when my body puts me in
cold, sterile rooms with doctors
who are incapable of listening?
I used to be the perfect patient,
but my patience has run out.

The work of getting help from you,
while you dispose of my every word,
is battering, almost

as exhausting as living in this body.

I feel the need to reassure you that
hate isn't the only thing I feel for my
disabled body.

I care for it, I rest when it needs me to,
it is part of me and it's beautiful.

My body can still be gentle, and helpful
be what allows me to share
my words.

But, I don't want to always have to
be nice to my body, and
that's normal, that's reasonable.

Just for a second, can you imagine
saying "I love you"
to a pair of legs made from sticks and
Classroom PVA?

This body is mine to love and to hate.
I must care for it because what other
choice do I have?

Not matter how hard I try to separate
my sense of self from it

I am always forced back into
my body as it screams for my help.

I must always eventually return
to my full-time job, knowing it's the single
best thing I can do for myself.

I can hate, and still try to get the help I need,
still find reasons to love myself.

Just let me feel my anger, doctor,

just for this moment.
And don't hold it against me.

I hope you understand.