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ENGL 1191

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Sonnet

There's someone in my head who dictates
Who shifts the lines of right and wrong each day, to justify an assault on the rights of others?
Who whispers softly, don't look like a fool,
Then changes what that means each day.
She tells me how to stand and speak,
To laugh, but not too loud or long,
I put on masks of bravery and pretending.
To memorize a version that feels wrong.
And still I listen, heartbeat quick and tight,
She seems to be aware of the danger I am unaware of.
As if one slip will pull me away,
Where everyone decides what I should be.
But maybe it's just fear I've learned to trust,
A voice that is able to control.

Free Verse

My body speaks to me
In some ways I didn't learn to translate.

Not in words

In signals.

A pulse that feels louder than it should,

A heaviness that sits behind my eyes,

Fatigue that doesn't ask permission,

It just settles in.

I can't help but wonder-

Is this normal?

Is this me?

Is this something I caused?

Because control feels easier

Rather than not knowing.

But bodies aren't contracts.

They don't promise consistency.

They shift,

React,

Hold things we don't even remember giving them.

Sometimes healing isn't clean.

Sometimes it looks like

Question marks,

Google searches,

Quiet worry at night.

And still-

I wake up in it.

I move in it.

I keep going.

Which has to mean something.

Villanelle

I replay each word I didn't mean,

Like something bad will happen if I don't.

My mind turns small moments into a scene.

A glance and a pause - and we ask what it all means.

I search for hidden things that probably won't,

I replay every word I didn't mean.

The silence stretches louder in between

Resistance Lives in Thoughts that say you have to have it or you can't have it.

My mind turns small moments into a scene.

of towering trees and splashing streams, of birds and buzzing bees, of furry friends and fluttering things.

Then trap myself inside it like I'm prone.

I replay every word I didn't mean.

And even when I know it's all routine,

That nothing's changed, that I'm still not alone,

My mind turns small moments into a scene.

But maybe not every thought is keen -

Not every fear deserves a sharpened tone.

I replay every word I didn't mean,

My mind turns small moments into a scene.

Haibun

I learned how to read a room before I actually walked in it.

Not consciously, but a quiet scan.

What version of me fits best?

It's not lying. It's adjusting.

Like turning a dial until the static softens

And I sound like something people recognize.

That doesn't need to be translated first.

Or if I've just gotten too good

At being understood in pieces.

Half-formed sentences

Shift depending on the crowd

Still searching for the whole.