

Rainbow Brain

For my daughter

The world looks at her
and sees something
to correct.

Not a child —
a puzzle piece
that doesn't fit
their paint by numbers version of life.

They speak in soft tones
That carry hard edges

They call it
“natural consequences” —
but it feels like punishment
for being herself.

They say
“self-regulation,”
but they mean silence.

They say
“social skills,”
but they mean copy us.

They say
“calm down,”
but they mean disappear.

They say
“expected behavior,”
but it's only ever
their expectations.

They use words like
“safe spaces,”
but only for people
who act the way they like.

They call it
“inclusive education,”
but the only thing included
is the pressure
to be less.

But I see
a rainbow brain.

Spinning, brilliant,
a thousand thoughts at once —
she *feels* more,
knows more,
imagines more
than they ever will
in their black-and-white world.

They do not see
that *they* live in grayscale.
Flat tones. Fixed lines.
A manual of what’s “appropriate”
written by people
who never imagined
a mind like hers.

They do not see
the color of her thinking.
The brightness,
the bend,
the beauty.

They do not ask
what it’s like
to feel everything
at once.

To hold too much light
in a world that squints.

They think they are helping.

But they are *smoothing*.
Flattening.
Erasing.

They are *wrong*.

She tries —
not to stand out —
but to blend in.
To speak on cue,
not out of turn.
To fold her colors
into black and white
just to feel like
maybe
she belongs.

They made her believe
that being like them
is being okay.

But it is not.
It is not okay
to call her too much
when it is the world
that offers too little.

They say it's about safety.
About fairness.
About inclusion.
But it's about control.
And making themselves feel better.

Because deep down,
they know —
if they opened the door to her world,
theirs would seem so small.

I'm sorry I can't change it.
Not fast enough.
Not yet.

But I won't let it change her.

Let her be loud.

Let her speak sideways.

Let her laugh at the wrong time.

Let her follow her own wild thoughts
to places you will never reach.

She does not need fixing.

Your rules do.

And one day —

maybe —

you'll be the ones

trying to fit in