


THE CANADIAN JOURNAL OF AUTISM EQUITY
LA REVUE CANADIENNE DE L'ÉQUITÉ EN MATIÈRE D'AUTISME

VOLUME 5 | ISSUE 1 | APRIL 2025

The Bastard

W. Roberts, Independent Author, Canada

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-3442-1996>

RECOMMENDED CITATION: Roberts, W. (2025). The Bastard. *The Canadian Journal of Autism Equity*, 5(1), 69–75.

The Bastard

Le bâtard

W. Roberts¹

Abstract

This poem reflects on my journey as an undiagnosed Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) foster child growing up in rural Newfoundland. It highlights the abusive and neglectful developmental years and how that lack of guidance drove me to a directionless life, regardless of the paths I tried to walk. It attempts to highlight the paths I have taken, the frustrations felt, the mistakes made, and the meeting of my wife. I am still "licking old wounds" in her shade. Life has been incredibly complex due to the multitude of masks I was forced to wear in order to survive, alone, without any evidence as to who, or what I am. I still do not fit, but at least I now know why. That's a great starting point.

Keywords

Autism, identity, abandonment, neglect, self-discovery

Résumé

Ce poème reflète mon parcours d'enfant non diagnostiqué ayant un trouble du spectre de l'autisme (TSA) et un trouble déficitaire de l'attention avec hyperactivité (TDAH) et placé en famille d'accueil dans la campagne de Terre-Neuve. Il met en lumière les années de développement marquées par les abus et la négligence et montre comment ce manque d'orientation m'a conduit à une vie sans direction, quels que soient les chemins que j'essayais de prendre.

¹ Independent Author

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-3442-1996>

Il tente de mettre en lumière les chemins que j'ai empruntés, les frustrations ressenties, les erreurs commises et la rencontre avec ma femme. Je suis encore en train de « panser de vieilles blessures » à son ombre.

La vie a été incroyablement complexe en raison de la multitude de masques que j'ai été forcé de porter pour survivre, seul, sans aucune preuve de qui, ou de ce que je suis. Je ne suis toujours pas à ma place, mais au moins je sais maintenant pourquoi. C'est un bon point de départ.

Mots-clés

Autisme, identité, abandon, négligence, découverte de soi

Mandated facades we are compelled to portray;
Cloaking of self to stumble through each trying day.
Crafted personas hastily met with decay,
Our crossed wires and blown fuses on spotlit display.

A young woman gave birth in a cold, tattered bed;
With no golden rings, she was unloved and unwed.
Frantic to rid her womb of its black, murky dread,
Afforded no comforts—a boy-bastard instead.

Judged unworthy without a hint of a trial,
The now-mother proclaims she was “Never with child!”
The bastard is reduced to a neglected file
And remanded to beasts with tastes hellishly vile.

The guardian beasts danced a macabre ballet:
Crooked teeth and greased faces, clothes stained and frayed.
Histories of barbarities openly displayed,
Eyes creased with hatred with an innocence to flay.

At the ripe age of four, the bastard started school,
An unspoken promise of solace from the cruel.
But reprieve was a lie, again proven a fool;
Kids banned him from the bus, no adult to overrule.

The events of the times the young bastard endured:
The stripping and tearing, being hunted and lured.
On full display, yet not a concerned head was turned;
All deaf and mute with line of sight oddly obscured.

The bastard chameleon begins its foray
From verminous nest to critical light of day.
Incessant confusion by the games others played,
Dimpled cheeks his first mask peacocked in display.

Those meant to befriend him, to mentor and inform,
Instead offered their mockery, insults, and scorn.
Gazing down flawless noses, his presence they mourned,
Oft echoing the question of why he was born.

The bastard's stunted mind now a mottled driftwood,
Twisted, gnarled, wormed, of little use and no good.
Each word he uttered was harshly misunderstood;
His scant rules came from books, not adults as they should.

The seeded storm yet caged on its predestined path,
A swelling northern sea oft threatening its wrath.
His potential moot: criminal or polymath,
Sticks and stones for his bones and names just for a laugh.

Anarchy and the bastard became steadfast friends;
He became the bastard they saw, wanted, and penned.
Curtains thrown open from staged pretenses descend,
The prophesied delinquent with lives to upend.

Nineteen years alive yet still twenty years behind,
The Crown's door slammed shut, the bastard run out of time.
No money for the beasts, and as if by design,
Discarded again and given nothing in kind.

The now seething, writhing, and cascading rage
Finds a place to call home guarding a dive bar stage.
His fury and despair in a silk-ribbon cage
Is unfocused, untamed, unwanted, and unsage.

Elaborate masks are created and displayed,
A tickle-trunk of self; the roles clumsily played.
To an empty house, the bastard foolishly brayed
Everything to no one; such was the life he'd made.

Four times a student and a thousand times an ass,
He had three graduations, twice top of the class.
Awards bearing his name, plaques of shiny faux brass,
Nothing learned, nothing gained, yet another impasse.

His jobs and relationships were treated as one,
Elaborate riddles in some uncommon tongue.
His failures a sitcom in a looping rerun,
A trail of burnt bridges left on a map undone.

All of the bastard's past deeds a compacting truth,
His shame, guilt, and remorse rapidly taking root.
Cheek held to splintered floorboards by time's heavy boot,
All of value outcast, withdrawal absolute.

Yet pressure and time are curious in effect;
Seismic shifts will divide but will also connect.
With oft-leaded burdens and some time to reflect,
The bastard has a choice: be crushed or resurrect.

Foundational cracks creep up the bastard's deceit;
Unmortared walls collapse, sloughing off in defeat.
Shielded eyes squinting in the powdered concrete,
Ozymandias woken from his wretched sleep.

A figure steps forward, a face he somehow knew;
Eyes of bright sapphire, smile-crinkled corners subdued.
A soft hand on a hard shoulder offers renewal
With three enigmatic words: "I. Accept. You."

The old bastard looked up with a skeptical eye
To the refuge promised; his skeletons scream "Lie!"
Pushing aside the fallacious, stale battle cry,
He accepts the hand up with a smile brazenly wry.

The bastard's protector, standing firm by his side,
An essence yet tainted, having no darkness to hide.
Promised sanctuary real; without trick or lie,
Old wounds licked in her shade; lifelong bindings untied.

The long-sought answers to questions asked by no one,
Forty years in a desert yet soaked to the bone.
Five hundred dollars to make a bastard undone:
ADHD - Severe, ASD Level One.

The ever-seething, writhing, and cascading rage,
All the fury and despair from a long-passed age,
Is cast out; the bastard no longer bearing its cage.
He is now focused, now tamed, now wanted, now sage.

Refuse the facades we are compelled to portray;
Lose the personas affording endless dismay.
Our wiring is sound, though we trip breakers some days;
You only have one self; put it on proud display.