WORKING TOWARD A COMMON VISION

CRIPPLE LULLABY
I’m trickster coyote in a gnarly-bone suit
I’m a fate worse than death in shit-kickin’ boots
I’m the nightmare booga you flirt with in dreams
‘Cause I emphatically demonstrate: It ain’t what it seems
I’m a whisper, I’m a heartbeat, I’m "that accident," and goodbye
One thing I am not is a reason to die.

I’m homeless in the driveway of your manicured street
I’m Evening Magazine’s SuperCrip of the Week
I’m the girl in the doorway with no illusions to spare
I’m a kid dosed on chemo, so who said life is fair
I’m a whisper, I’m a heartbeat, I’m "let’s call it suicide," and a sigh
One thing I am not is a reason to die

I’m the poster child with doom-dipped eyes
I’m the ancient remnant set adrift on ice
I’m that Valley girl, you know, dying of thin
I’m all that is left of the Cheshire Cat’s grin

I’m the Wheelchair Athlete, I’m every dead Baby Doe
I’m the Earth’s last volcano, and I am ready to blow
I’m a whisper, I’m a heartbeat, I’m a genocide survivor, and Why?
OnE thing I am not is a reason to die.

I am not a reason to die.

– Cheryl Marie Wade

1995
Sandra Jensen, a member of PeopleFirst, is denied a heart-lung transplant by the Stanford University School of Medicine because she has Down syndrome. After pressure from disability rights activists, administrators there reverse their decision, and in January 1996, Jensen becomes the first person with Down syndrome to receive a heart-lung transplant.

1996
Sen. Robert Dole becomes the first person with a visible disability since Franklin Roosevelt to run for president of the United States. Unlike Roosevelt, he publicly acknowledges the extent of his disability.

1996
Rod ieee’s self-advocate in Minnesota, purchases a home of her own.

1998
The Supreme Court upholds “Most Integrated Setting” requirement in the Olmstead case.

1999
The Remembering with Dignity project secures the release of names of people buried anonymously in the Faribault Regional Treatment Center and begins to mark the gravesites with proper headstones. The state of Minnesota refuses to apologize.

2000
10th anniversary of the ADA.

Fewer than 50,000 people living in public institutions.

Internationally recognized journalist, writer, and broadcaster John Hockenberry:

Disability IS an ART.

The groundbreaking Wee Cups Disabled Women’s Theatre Group from Berkeley, California.

The late comedian Ben Stiller: “I am one of Jerry’s Kids. Well, one of Jerry Garan’s kids.”

The reigning Queen Mother of Gnarly, Cheryl Marie Wade, has written powerfully and poetically on disability culture. Her essay, Disability Culture Rap, was made into an experimental documentary of the same name.

Rev. Dave and the Church of 80% Sincerity.

Lee Williams: “Disability – it’s about culture.”

DISABILITY IS A UNIQUE WAY OF LIFE.

Celebrating who we are and where we come from, while organizing for lasting change.

Acting on the Call (SM)