



Some of Us Just Fall: On Nature and Not Getting Better

Polly Atkin

Unnamed Press (Mar 19, 2024)

Hardcover \$28.00 (312pp)

978-1-961884-00-7

Polly Atkin's memoir *Some of Us Just Fall* reveals the concentric circles surrounding chronic illnesses, drawing on history, experience, science, and literature to explore life lived in a liminal space with nuance.

From toddlerhood on, Atkin's bones broke often—and without compelling reason. Her body hurt; her skin became gray. Pain fogged her brain as her joints rolled in and out of their sockets. As she grew, she tried to understand her body's battle as an inheritance—her parents and grandparents had similar issues. She also sought understanding through more distant DNA, through England's National Health Service, and through her affinity for the Wordsworth family and their environs of Grassmere in the Lakes District. She weaves such stories into her own, resulting in rich historical detail and burgeoning clarity on the enormity of not understanding or having command of one's body.

With a fractured style that mirrors the experience of living with a chronic illness, the book eschews linearity to embrace episodic storytelling. Its sections cover varied means of coping with hypermobile Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome and comorbidities. Atkin's own diagnosis is the narrative thread that pulls her past experiences together, helping to make sense of her broken bones and spinning knees. The book acknowledges that diagnosis for those without common complaints can be difficult; sexism, ableism, ageism, medical ignorance, apathy, and arrogance all make answers elusive, as those with rare chronic illnesses "cannot be diagnosed if we can't be seen." Her book does a powerful job of indicting the medical establishment for its profound blindness toward those with chronic illnesses.

A memoir about chronic illness and the search for answers, *Some of Us Just Fall* is illuminating, fierce, and intelligent.

CAMILLE-YVETTE WELSCH (March / April 2024)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.