

NAMI NJ Expressive Arts - Poetry Showcase - November 2016

**12 Hours of Shadows
by Susanne Mills**

9 AM:

You shadow me, dark and dismal, standing behind me,
Grabbing tightly, pulling back, pulling down, sinking slowly,
Discounting everything I am, all I ever was,

12 PM:

You shadow me, gray and hazy, seated beside me,
Holding my hand, lovingly, inter-twined, bobbing haphazardly,
Understanding that it will get easier, saving me,

3 PM:

You shadow me, long and light, reaching in front of me,
Egging me onward, nudging, moving me upward, floating gaily,
Encouraging me forward to a new life ahead, calming me,

6PM:

You shadow me, soft and gentle, dancing before me,
Clapping rhythmically, singing melodically, swimming forcefully.
Showing me a new way of life, and I am waving triumphantly.

9 PM:

You shadow me, difficult and troubling, pulling me ahead,
Life's obstacles, encouraging coping skills, doing my laps,
Knowing I can make it, Knowing I can take it, Knowing I won't break.

Dear Mind
by Yvette Brown-Cobb

Dear Mind
So many questions
Why why why my dear mind
How do you drive me
But won't leave me
I can't escape the whispers
That lay dormant but once roamed free
They scare me
But it's not rare in some cases
How do I cope when there are
Side effects to my mind
Dear mind
I know you're mine
But why why why
The tricks you play
When I don't even self medicate
As long as I seek treatment we can be lifelong partners
Dear mind so many questions
That pop and I lose my train of thought
All because you want to play games
That leave me sick
But thank God today I'm free
Of your tricks
All because of treatment

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**Maybe, who knows?
by Mackenzy Samedi**

Maybe, who knows?
Maybe, I am the person mopping the floor
Maybe, I am the person cooking on the grill
Maybe, who knows?
Maybe, I am the person cleaning the parking lot
Maybe, I am the person taking out the trash
Maybe, who knows?
Maybe, I am the person sleeping on the floor
Maybe, I am the homeless person looking for a home
Maybe, who knows?
Maybe, I am the person who purposely sign himself at the psychiatric hospital
Maybe, I am the guy looking for something at a church
Maybe, who knows?
Maybe, I am the guy who is being ignored in his hospital bed
Maybe, I am the guy who was diagnosed by different psychiatrists with something different
such: Bipolar, depression, and schizophrenia
Maybe, who knows?
Maybe, I am the guy searching for something at a strip club
Maybe, I am the guy searching for something at a bar
Maybe, who knows?
Maybe, I am the guy which it's taking him over 8 years to complete his Bachelor's degree
Maybe, I am the guy who got arrested by the police and ended up at the psychiatric hospital, but
with no record
Maybe, who knows?
Maybe, this just part of my journey in the stage of life
Maybe, I am supposed to leave a legacy for this generation and the coming generations
Maybe, that's why I had a fail suicide attempt
Maybe, The Lord will guide me to be Great!
Maybe, who knows?

**Thanksgiving (Sower's Vision)
by Jeff Varanyak**

On a hallowed piece of soil
Flat clearing, made by the Sower
Crops planted and grow
Late Autumn... horse corn
Tattered sentinels
Rejoice, for their time has come
They will be harvested
Farmer's fodder for the Winter
To feed hungry livestock
Over the frigid Jersey season

An outstanding Thursday in November
Set aside to give thanks and praise
Our Creator touches our spirit and soul
Gives Grace to the farmer's family
With a feast, fit for the King of Kings
Venison, Turkey, Yams, Cranberries
Farmer's kin, abundantly blessed, indeed

...it all goes back to the Sower
who scattered good seed
on a flat clearing...

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Untitled

by Melanie Aaron Pappas

A gentle touch, a warm embrace
A whisper of your kiss upon a face
The laughter dancing in your eyes
Always takes us by surprise
Each step forward stretches into a mile
With simple achievements, we share a smile
Hands outstretched, you reach for more
Never letting the world ignore
You make an impression on all you meet
Pushing the labels and boundaries to defeat
For years, together we've traveled this road
When with stick and stones, others have slowed
You pitted your shoulder against the scruff
Showing you're made of better stuff
Words - not your primary communication
We've honed our skills in translation
Just when we've thought the journey's done
You take on a new challenge, a 5k run
You applied strength in another matter
Forcing naysayers into silence, to scatter
The doors you've opened when you thought you couldn't
Have taken you where others wouldn't
Letting sunlight in to conquer fear
Moving us to quietly cheer
We watch you dance and twirl – and shout
Understanding the acting out
Knowing you, our lives have changed direction
We've learned a different kind of affection
A varied language and vocabulary
That fills the gaps and makes us merry
You know we'll never change
Though outsiders might find it "strange"
The ongoing cycle of life we enjoy
No one can destroy
Through surreptitious looks and slights
Together, we'll look down from dizzying heights
Hold our hands
We're the ones who understand
Precisely
Perfectly.