

NAMI NJ Expressive Arts - Poetry Showcase - October 2016

A Change

By John Wolff

Dark, Darkness, Death
Psychosis, Hallucinations
Dismal and Somber.

A Spark, A Light, A Clearing in the Clouds,
Splintered Sunlight Shining All Around.
Brightness, Life, Happiness to be Found.

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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?

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**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

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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.

Untitled

By Randy Elfenbein

I am mentally ill,
an apparition stalking the dark
hallways of a demon-filled mansion,
haunted by the memories of collapsing
into uncomprehending pain that descends
further into a death-like blankness.
In my heart, I believe I can no longer be restored.
Still, in the operating theatre, I am anxious,
waiting for the pinprick, for the anesthesia.
And then I hear the roar of winds
clasping the mouths of distant caverns
and sink rapidly into unknowing darkness.
Now a patient etherised upon a table,
I am Shelley's gothic thought experiment in electricity
waiting to awake a newborn revenant.
At first, I am hardly able to communicate a solitary thought
and shuffle day by day along this mortal realm.
I have no memories or desires.
But the days and months accumulate and evince
over and again time's indomitable will to change,
as a vitalising force reanimates my spirit,
and I reenter society by degrees,
finding moments of union
in and outside my home and in myself.
I live each day between two immensities,
fear and gratitude,
keenly aware of the fragile gift my sanity represents.
I remain mentally ill,
but my memories and my humanity
have been returned to me.