

**A Brighter Day**  
**By Nora Weiss**

It was herself she despised.  
Criticized. Dehumanized.  
And no one seemed to realize  
Her happiness was a disguise  
Tricking foolish eyes.

But a few –too few-  
Were far to wise  
To be deceived by the lies;  
To not see through her disguise.

They declared her sanity to be feign;  
She was trapped inside her own damaged brain.  
She had lost her ability to reason;  
Her only solution was constantly scheming.

How could she have felt so safe  
In such a dangerous place?

Oh, it was hard,  
So hard to ungrasp  
From the self-destructive thoughts  
That had taken over so fast.

Her life had been stolen,  
Yet she was not broken.  
She gained her freedom back;  
Put her life back intact.

Recovery seemed impossible:  
An impassable obstacle.  
But eventually she did it.  
How? She cannot say-  
But when she looks for tomorrow  
She sees a brighter day.

And there's now light in her eyes  
And laughter in her step.  
She has been able to realize  
Her happiness will not ebb.

**NAMI NJ Dara Axelrod Expressive Arts 2016 Mental Health Poetry Contest - 1st Place**

She has found salvation  
Within her own mind.  
She has reached illumination  
Her pursuits in life aligned.

Her gratitude grows every day she walks the earth  
She has, at last, established her self-worth.