

Brain on Fire

by Gemma Doyle

"She's quirky" they say.
"She has her own way",
She struggled in school,
Didn't understand social rules.

"She can't be autistic, she can talk and look in your eye"
So why does she stand out, then go home and cry?
She seems outgoing and confident, but this is a lie.
She gets overwhelmed, can't understand why.
Ahead of her peers in reading and writing,
Yet she's "awkward" and still does nail and lip biting.

You see her talk, looking in your eye,
Yet you don't see when she comes home with a sigh,
Drops to the bed, rocking, screaming,
Unable to talk, throwing things, seething.
Wondering why this happens, embarrassed and wishes she was
dreaming.

She's stuck still in a world that won't stop spinning.
She turns 18, this is just the beginning,
Drink numbs the pain, makes her feel normal.
She turns 27, decides to get sober,
Finally ending the mental rollercoaster.

She does her research, finds a doctor.
"There's a name for this, you're not just off your rocker".
She gets a diagnosis and finally sees,
She's not broken, she's strong and she's free,
From the mask she was taught to wear.
She can now navigate life with her own special flair.
Never was quirky or awkward you see,
She was autistic
She is me.



Autism
Acceptance
Week 2023