

Painful Illusion

When you look at me
What is it that you see
A happy bubbly woman
Young and wild and free
Beginning the prime of her life
A long life road ahead
No concerns or many challenges
Nothing yet in life to dread
My smile is the definition
Of a poker face worn strong
An illusion hiding constant fight
A war I have been fighting all along
My challenges don't discriminate
They don't care about age or sex
My strength may get me through the day
But it won't stop what happens next
My health is not invincible to me
Yet no one else can see the scars
Ignorance keeps everyone believing
That we all can reach the stars
But my arms are weighted down
With every challenge you don't see

My energy source not so forgiving
And my abilities not so carefree
Not every person fighting
Can be identified from a glance
A smile and happy person
Does not mean they have the same chance
Below the skin there could be things
That keep their life at bay
That manifests into grief and isolation
Which they pray will disappear someday
Yet those around them just continue
To whisper and judge what they don't know
Making the battle more hostile
And lessening their glow
So next time you look at me
And see a smile shining bright
Remember my smile is more for you
Then proof that I'm alright.

Toni O'Neill

