

## **Resilient Hope**

**Emily Gawel**

**University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**

### **Reflections from the author**

Writing this poem was difficult for me. It's difficult to discuss something that has impacted my life in such an intimate and personal way. I was able to write this piece because of Social Work 300, which taught me the importance of sharing as a way of learning. Finding the strength to share with my peers, as they shared with me, allowed me to understand aspects of the world that I was unfamiliar with. I live with a physical disability that isn't immediately discernable by society's prying eyes. This allows me to see how someone's view can change in an instance based on things that can't be controlled.

This poem starts with the historical pain that people with my identity have gone through. This class taught me the importance of being able to know how far we have come in order to recognize the obstacles we still face when making positive changes. I tied historical pain and comments that individuals have said to me over the years together in order to show there are still changes to be made.

The second half of this poem focuses on the importance of support systems. It explains that despite those who may stereotype, there are also those who will accept you for who you are. It's important to remain hopeful that there are people in this world who will accept you for you, and that educating individuals to become more accepting is a great way to develop this. This class taught me the importance of being open minded and listening to individuals from all backgrounds. This inspired my poem; Afterall "an accepting world would be a great start."

*Keywords:* resilience, identity, hope

**About the Author:** *Emily Gawel is a junior pursuing a dual degree in Social Work and Psychology. After she earns her MSW she hopes to work with refugees.*

## **Resilient Hope**

*People like her once had been put to death*

*Exorcised and labeled inept*

*Confined to their beds*

*Locked in small rooms*

*People like her with invisible wounds*

*People still gawk and people still pray*

*Trying to take the disability away*

*But she knows a secret they'll never know*

*That's the true secret of finding hope*

*Finding people who accept her and never gloat*

*The kind of people that keep her afloat*

*They're found in lost corners and inside rare gems*

*And it takes true hope for her to find them*

*The kind of people who stay by her side*

*As truly resilient as the blue skies*

*So hold out hope for the ones who stay*

*The ones who don't pray for you to change*

*The ones who accept you with all their heart...*

*An accepting world would be a great start*

People like her once had been put to death  
Exorcised and labeled inept  
Confined to their beds  
Locked in small rooms  
People like her with invisible wounds

People still gawk and people  
still pray  
Trying to take the disability away  
But she knows a secret they'll never know  
That's the true secret

of finding  
Hope



of finding people who accept her  
and never gloat  
The kind of people that keep her  
They're found in lost corners and  
inside rare rooms  
and it takes true hope  
for her to find them

The kind of people who stay by  
her side  
As truly resilient as the blue skies

So hold out hope for the ones who stay  
The ones who don't pray for you to change  
The ones who accept you with all their heart

An accepting world would be a great start