



# High Country

## Eat Me

In honor of National Poetry Month I have written a poem about a young woman struggling with anorexia nervosa. The poem is written from her perspective and illustrates what the thought process is potentially like for someone who struggles with this awful disease.

### “Eat Me”

It eats me inside. Its appetite consumes all of my desires, passions, and happiness. It takes what used to be a social gathering with friends and family and turns it into an everlasting war with my thoughts and stomach. “You don’t deserve this meal” it whispers. Its appetite has begun to eat my self-esteem and has completely almost consumed my ability to feel hunger. “Hunger is a sign of weakness” it tells me.

Suddenly this thing inside of me has drawn the attention of my friends and family. I have seemed to go through the motions but inside all I can think of is food. This voice whispers that what sits on my plate are temptations trying to make me give into this hunger. I have suddenly discovered exercise and new hope that I can sweat these demons out. “You have to be in control” it tells me.

This anorexia has even eaten my eyesight, for surely this person in the mirror can’t be me. If only people understood that this isn’t about vanity. My doctor warns me that the scale is dangerously lacking in numbers. I just don’t know how I got to this point. Where did the weight go? I

wasn’t purposely trying to lose weight. In being in control, how did I lose control?

I refuse to let this take my life and be the thing that defines me. I dig deep inside to find the slightest bit of hunger that I am sure the anorexia must have forgotten to eat. I am going to cater this one last bit of hunger and nourish its growth. The voice of my hunger begins to overpower the voices of my anorexia now. The doctors tell me to ignore the whispers of my anorexia. If only they knew how difficult this is.

It screams awful things at me, telling me I don’t deserve food, and this is the only thing in my life that I can control. It tells me I am weak.

With time and help from my doctors and social networks I have almost silenced the whispers. I feel as though I am almost what this crazy world calls “normal.” My doctors tell me I am strong to have overcome this mental illness.

I have quieted my demons...for now.

-Victoria Casey



Victoria Casey is a junior at Appalachian State University. She has a lot of personal experience between herself and family and friends when it comes to mental health.

## Next Meetings

**Monday, May 5, 2014**

**Brenda Reece**

### **Taking Care of yourself and others**

Brenda is the Family Caregiver Specialist for the High Country Council of Government's Area Agency on Aging and has worked in the healthcare and aging fields for the past 15 years. She is co-founder and Executive Director of the High Country Caregiver Foundation. **\*This meeting will run from 7pm-8pm**

**Monday, June 2, 2014**

**Vanessa Brumfield**

**WRAP**

Vanessa Brumfield works at Smoky Mountain LME-MCO as a liaison to Smoky Mountain LME-MCO's Consumer & Family Advisory Committee and Human Rights Committee. She is part of Smoky's Consumer Relations Team, which also includes Family Partners and Peer & Family Support Specialists. Vanessa is a certified WRAP® Facilitator. At the June 2 meeting, Vanessa will speak about Wellness Recovery Action Plan® (WRAP®) and how having a plan can help deal with health and life challenges.

She will also give an update on Smoky Mountain's efforts to offer WRAP classes throughout the 23 counties in its service area, and will share information about local resources for help with behavioral health crises. **This meeting will run from 7pm-8pm**

Our meetings are in the Watauga County Public Library conference room. Watauga County Public Library in downtown Boone is located at 140 Queen Street, behind Mast General Store. If you get there before 7pm you will be able to go in the main door. After that we will enter and exit through the side door.



## A little word from your High Country Hope Team Captain Jenn Matthews!



NAMI High Country and friends will be participating in the 2014 NAMIWalks in Raleigh, NC. The walk is on May 3<sup>rd</sup> at 10 am at the Dorothea Dix Campus. The bigger our team the better! We would love for Appalachian students and the Boone and surrounding community to join us in this walk to fight against mental illness stigma. NAMIWalks is celebrating its 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and is the most successful mental health awareness and fundraising event in America! Don't miss out on this wonderful opportunity for advocacy. Register soon with team High Country Hope to receive a custom team t-shirt.

Come join the fun by going to the link below:

<http://namiwalks.nami.org/highcountryhope>

From our Team Page, click on the "Join My Team" button to register and help us fundraise. If you can't join us, you can also support our team by making a donation online.

Welcome to NAMI High Country. NAMI, which stands for National Alliance on Mental Illness, is a National Organization. We are a local chapter that serves Watauga, NC and surrounding counties. If you are a person living with a mental illness, a friend or family member of someone living with a mental illness, a student interested in mental health issues, or a professional working in the mental health field – we hope you'll be involved!

If you would like to receive this newsletter by mail or be added to our email list please call or email us. Our contact info is below. Professionals, feel free to make copies of our newsletter and give to clients or place in your office.