

## See Me

I am invisible.

The human eye cannot see me.

You have to tell someone I am there.

Or else I just do not exist.

I am a part of you.

I can give you relief, sometimes grief.

I make you unique, set you apart,

But you sometimes feel ashamed.

No one can see me.

I make it hard to make a new friend.

Eyes to the floor, tongue twisted, anxious.

I make it hard to work with groups.

Scared of sharing input, letting everyone else do the talking.

But I help you work alone.

Sometimes that's the best way to go.

No one can see me.

I create your passion, things that spark your interest.

From writing to drawing, from Star Wars to football.

I'm the reason why you get overwhelmed by stuff, like

Loud sounds, stinky smells, that tag on the back of your shirt.

I'm the reason why you prefer your "me time."

You feel safe, content, happy.

No one can see me.

Who am I, you are wondering?

My name is Autism Spectrum Disorder,

But my friends call me Asperger's.

No one can see me.

## **Stimulate**

The whistle the coach just blew?

It sounds like a scream is tearing my eardrum.

The bark from the neighbor's yellow lab?

I jumped, as if I heard a gunshot instead.

The ketchup the waiter put on my fries?

It's spicy to me. I like ranch dressing better.

The crowds at the zoo, or at the store?

I'm trapped. I can't breathe. Everyone's touching me.

The two people talking to me at the same time?

Who do I listen to? Both of you, please stop.

The fire drill that stopped my history lesson?

It's so loud, so shrill, I want to just go outside.

The sweater my Aunt Frieda knitted me?

It's itchy, it's hot. Take. It. Off.

I need to walk away.

Please let me go.

I need a minute.

Don't touch me.

I have to calm down.

My heart is pounding.

My brain is throbbing.

Do not overstimulate me.

## Sometimes

What was it? I did not know.

There was always something different between me and other kids.

Their squeals were so confident. Is that supposed to be "normal"?

I preferred to stay quiet, not raising my hand in class.

Only when I really knew the answer, is when I put up my hand.

Sometimes I could not understand what my teachers wanted from me,

And they yelled at my confusion, as if I was dumb.

Sometimes I could not understand the rules of Capture The Flag,

Only to have my peers make sure they don't ask me to play next time.

Friendship was confusing.

I didn't know how to make a friend. Or keep one.

Sometimes I didn't want to talk to anybody. I was mute.

Until I got home, and I flapped my gums to my parents.

What about now?

I have friends now; a handful, but that's plenty for me.

I still have trouble in school sometimes,

But my professors offer to help and not judge.

I'm still not a people person, but I still go out sometimes.

My passion is still alive. Writing is my favorite. And crime shows.

I talk more now, sometimes surprising myself.

I know "normal" does not exist. I know I am unique.

I just need help sometimes.