

Over the Counter

Laughter
It's like a medicine
Or so people say
They say it's full of happiness
And joy

Yellow
Like the sunny days you see in Arizona
Laughter is an abundance of me and you
Until we're blue
It's a joke
Laughter is just a joke that never wakes up
It's a knock knock who's there
Someone fix my hair
Because I've woken up in the morning
And I don't like how I look anymore

Red
Like my cheeks
No smile
No joy
No--
STOP
No don't tell me that it's ok
Because it's not
It's not ok to pronounce laughter as a medicine
When it seems to do worse than the hot and cold vapor rub
Or NyQuil
Or Tylenol
Or Pepto
Or drugs
Or alcohol

Or...

Any medicine that is supposed to make you feel better

Green

Just like the grass that blows in the wind

This medicine blows our direction

Blows into every conversation that holds weight

Has value

Meaning and purpose

Orange

The color I think of when I envision my future

Full of hope and joy

Joy is supposed to bring laughter

Supposed to be good and honest

But people can fake laughter just like they fake religion

Or intelligence

Or the love of unity and diversity

That medicine --

It's more than just a medicine

It's an addiction

An addiction you can't wake up from

Because once you start

You can't stop

Purple

Like a violet blowing in the wind

Like the school I went to when I was young

When we had tummy aches

The nurse would give us medicine

Medicine that was over the counter

Medicine that would eventually wear off

But laughter

Laughter is an over-the-counter drug

That doesn't wear off

Laughter is like a rainbow of mixed emotions
Light
Sadness
Feeling to flow
Hope
Innocence
Joy
And Lucky
Lucky that I don't laugh anymore
Lucky because I'm in full health
Lucky, so I don't need an over-the-counter drug that never wears off

—*Esrael Nykea Bennett*