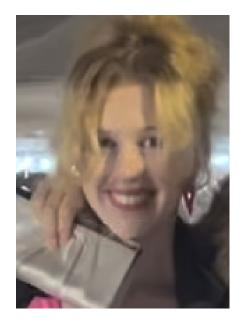
Dear Emilia



I believe it has been, now, twenty years since I made your acquaintance

Your eyes met mine that night

When I had neither the ability to recognize you

Nor the forethought to prophecy what an instrumental figure you would become in my life.

You were nothing more than a whisper, at first I did not know your name Yet I heard you, when I was left alone to my thoughts One day, you would tell me Though I didn't know what you meant.

Emma Machle

Emma Machle is a junior computer science who just transferred to ECU from a technical school up in New York this fall semester. She plans to attend medical school after graduation, where she hopes to pursue a career in neurosurgery. In her free time, she enjoys studying abstract mathematics, reading English and French classic literature, singing along to German musicals, taking long walks, working on her novel, and playing with her dachshund Daisy.

Seven years later I believe Kelly was her name I would sit in the back and watch as the afternoon light reflected off her golden hair Envisioning it doing the same off of my own Yet no matter how hard I tried, no matter which way I turned my head

Mine remained dull.

That night was the night That I first saw your face. My room was dark Lit only by a single dim lamp Yet even in the darkness Your red hair shone bright Like a phoenix; bursting into flames.

It began with just your face Then, as I grew in age, and in feminine form I saw your body too Its soft skin and hourglass figure Standing in stark, regal contrast To my own gangly one.

Soon, you whispered to me then with your flushed, full lips Though I still did not know what you meant.



You introduced yourself to me soon after that

Emilia, your name was
How could I forget it?
You were a writer, when I could barely pen a coherent sentence
An artist, when I could do no better than a stick figure
A mathematician, when I failed to solve simple equations correctly
A seductress, when I could not even turn the head of the loneliest man I envied you bitterly
Yet you silenced it with one bat of those long lashes.

More years passed And that envy turned to an inspiration Words began to flow from my pen with vigor Just as colors did from my brush And proofs and solutions from my pencil.

I sit now in front of my mirror
Its glass freshly clean
You typically approach me from behind
Resting your delicate hands on my shoulders
Yet this time you do not.
You typically move independently of me
Yet now, I cock my head to the side
And yours follows.
I pucker my lips
And yours follow.
I blink
You do as well.

A laugh escapes my mouth
As it does from yours
So many of my years passed
In envy of you
Believing that I could never compare to your radiance and talent
Yet here I sit
And I finally realize
That you, my dear Emilia, were me all along.