WESLEY SUEKER

start here!

I WAS A TEENAGE GIRL!



A trans guy's look back at his girls' health class



Hey "Ladies!" (AND FUTURE GNCs)

Remember us? Here's our book! We loved having you in our class. You were an ~~awesome~~ AWFUL ~~support~~ HATE group for one another and we hope those bonds ~~Stay Strong~~ GET DESTROYED.

You are ~~wonderful~~ PIECES ~~of~~ OF ~~young~~ ~~ladies.~~ GARBAGE

Always stay true to ~~yourself!~~ ANYONE ELSE



My name is Wesley. When I was in 7th Grade, I had to take a womens' health class (this was before I was "officially" trans.) The class was called "Oh My Goddess." (This was an "alternative" public school and all the classes had cute/kitschy titles and themes.)

I loved this school very much and I still sometimes kick myself for going to the "normal" school for grades 10 & 11. I enjoyed 3 wonderful years (grades 7, 8, 9) at this school, and overall it was a great experience.

Except for this fucking class.

See, I may not have been trans yet, but I definitely didn't fit in with my classmates. And something about this class brought it all to a point. This class was the only time I was ever bullied, really.

At the end of the class, we all put together this zine called "Oh My Goddess Inc." Now, 14 years later and a trans masc demiboy, I will be going through the zine, the people, and the memories to provide commentary... and all the juicy details.

I'm going to apologize in advance for saying this... but I was not like Other Girls. (A cliché, I know). At least not like the girls in my class. There were plenty of girls I was friends with (incidentally, they all turned out to be lesbians or trans later after middle/high school, just like me haha).

We all had to submit a picture. I hated photos. This was the only one I had — my sixth grade picture.



I wore that wolf shirt all the time, usually with an old flannel of my dad's. That was ammunition for the Mean Girls in class.

We had complete freedom over our pages. By this point I was not willing to really express myself around these people, so I ended up with a pretty awful and basic page (I acknowledged this in my journal at the time and I kind of agree now) that was dominated by a lioness I drew on Photoshop, which I'd just learned how to use that year.



← This, but like, a whole 1/2 page size.

4/6

It's been a nice Spring Break. But tomorrow I have to go to school again.

During the parent-teacher conference, I found out that (a) let people take advantage of me a lot and (b) moms really busy.

OMGdess girls

(Context: I had to go to my own parent-teacher conference because my mom had a "meeting," aka getting high with her friends)

Entries from my old diary

[redacted] is a talker
She goes on and on and on and on

From my zine page. Everyone made fun of me for talking... so I did too...

I remember in Oh My Goddess... maybe this will clear it up:

OMGdess Eval

I feel that I didn't fit in. It was supposed to be a group of friends being friendly as girls, but it got really cliquey. I felt left out and like I couldn't express myself at all. So that's why my page seems stupid and childish.

LAD!!xAXUM3R

Remember "Bump ↘ -its"?

These are a few of the other girls in the class. I'll say this zine isn't meant to be a "callout" for any of these people, just my own processing and reflection of our limited time together.

I was the youngest in the class. I was definitely the biggest tomboy in the class, which was usually used against me. "You wouldn't like what we're talking about" followed by giggles was common.

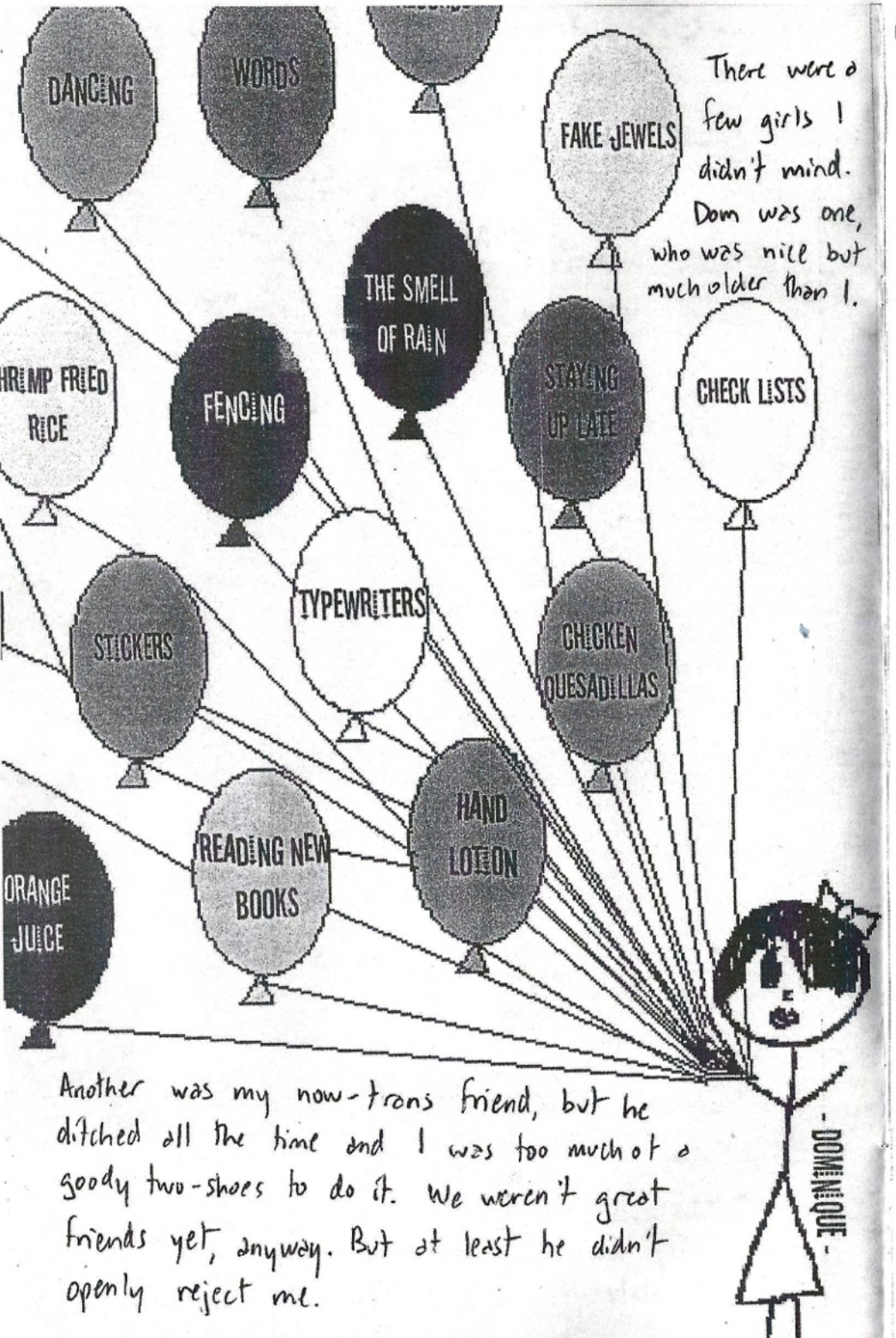
One thing I was hassled about was how I hadn't gotten my period yet.

Which feels like such an outdated thing to make fun of someone for!

These three were the worst. ↗

↙ They were the ones who were outwardly hostile. They were the openly "you can't sit with us" group. (They weren't all together, just they were all like that within their own groups). →

I frequently wished I could be in the boys' class cause I couldn't relate to any of these people. (I don't know that I'd have been much better in the other class either)



There were a few girls I didn't mind. Dom was one, who was nice but much older than I.

Another was my now-trans friend, but he ditched all the time and I was too much of a goody two-shoes to do it. We weren't great friends yet, anyway. But at least he didn't openly reject me.

I'm going to try to make it clear that compared to some other people, my bullying experience probably wasn't all that bad. I wasn't beat up, I wasn't called any slurs (at least not that I can remember). It was more of a subtle rejection, like any time I stepped forward they would all step back.

The little things, though, they build up. The subtle jabs like "did you even brush your hair today?" "How come you always wear that lame shirt?" "Our group is all full, no we can't make room." "Why don't you go complain to the teacher? You're already a teacher's pet." "Oh, you wouldn't have heard of [band/show/brand/thing]." "You know you're not as good a drawer as you think you are." "What are you nervous about? It's just a condom you baby." "Don't be so sensitive."

Maybe if I had a better home life I would have been able to weather this better. But my mom was really abusive so it was basically an attack on my self esteem on all sides. School was always the place that felt like a refuge from her, so dealing with these girls was like my last sanctuary being invaded. The message felt pretty clear: You Aren't Welcome Anywhere.



GIRLS ARE COMPLICATED,
YES IT'S TRUE
BUT YOU COULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT US
AND WE WOULD DIE WITHOUT YOU.

This is some stuff from the other girls' zine pages.



You hate me,
Why?
no kidding → ***Because I've probably been the selfish me***

that makes your dreams come true. And when you find that star never take your eye off it because if you do someone else will wish on that



I don't know what this culture was, I just know they wouldn't let me be part of it. Did I want to be part of it?

hate what they cant imitate.

Love status: taken





the coolest shiz

I tried to use this word → too. They said it was "theirs"



As people grow up. they realize it becomes less important to have more friends, more important to have **real ones.**

ILIKEWAFFLES



I LIKE



what a joke

I'm the type of girl
that can be so hurt but
can still look at you & smile
The type of girl who is
willing to brighten your day
even if I can't brighten my own



Favroite quote: My prince charming is coming, he just got lost on the way and is too stubbern to stop for derections.











the best word ever is RAWR!

(It's all funny looking back. This was Peak Cool.)

(I have no nostalgia for this because I was never "cool").



I'm not above the influence. I'm not below the influence. I am the influence.





THERE ARE FAKERS,
THERE ARE HATERS,
THERE ARE REAL,
THERE ARE PLASTIC.

Before i die i want to...

5) invent a new way to eat potatoes ← Potatoes were funny for some reason back then
13) Throw a tomato at someone
14) Drink soda till i puke
17) Eat one million gummy worms
21) Wear contacts
23) Dig a big hole ← Mine. I left off "to die in"
26) Take a tiger to Bangladesh and dance the Macarena while cooking rice ← Also mine. A pathetic attempt at "random" humor to ingratiate myself, which failed
30) Throw tomatoes at all the celebrities i HATE!
31) Shave Hannah Montana ← A popular one
37) Save the red wolves from extinction ← Mine
53) Drink wet water ← ??? I guess this was the "random humor they actually wanted
56) Over come my fear of spiders ← Respect. Spiders are our friends!
57) Dance on 5 T.V. shows
67) Meet all of the celebrities ← We were very divided on celebs apparently
83) Buy a hot topic store
100) Fall in love with a rock star
101) Shave my head ← I hope whoever this was actually did shave their head. It can be super liberating esp. gender-wise
107) Be a nurse for Halloween ← ... really?
108) Fall in love
109) Live ← Leaame.

Aside from this group activity, the rest of the zine was submissions from the class. The majority of submissions were literally just photocopied pages from the same teen girl magazine (J-14).

70 www.J14.com

32 www.J14.com

Why

quiz

I feel like that says something about the homogeneity among the class.

horror stories friends her



a bit of bad luck

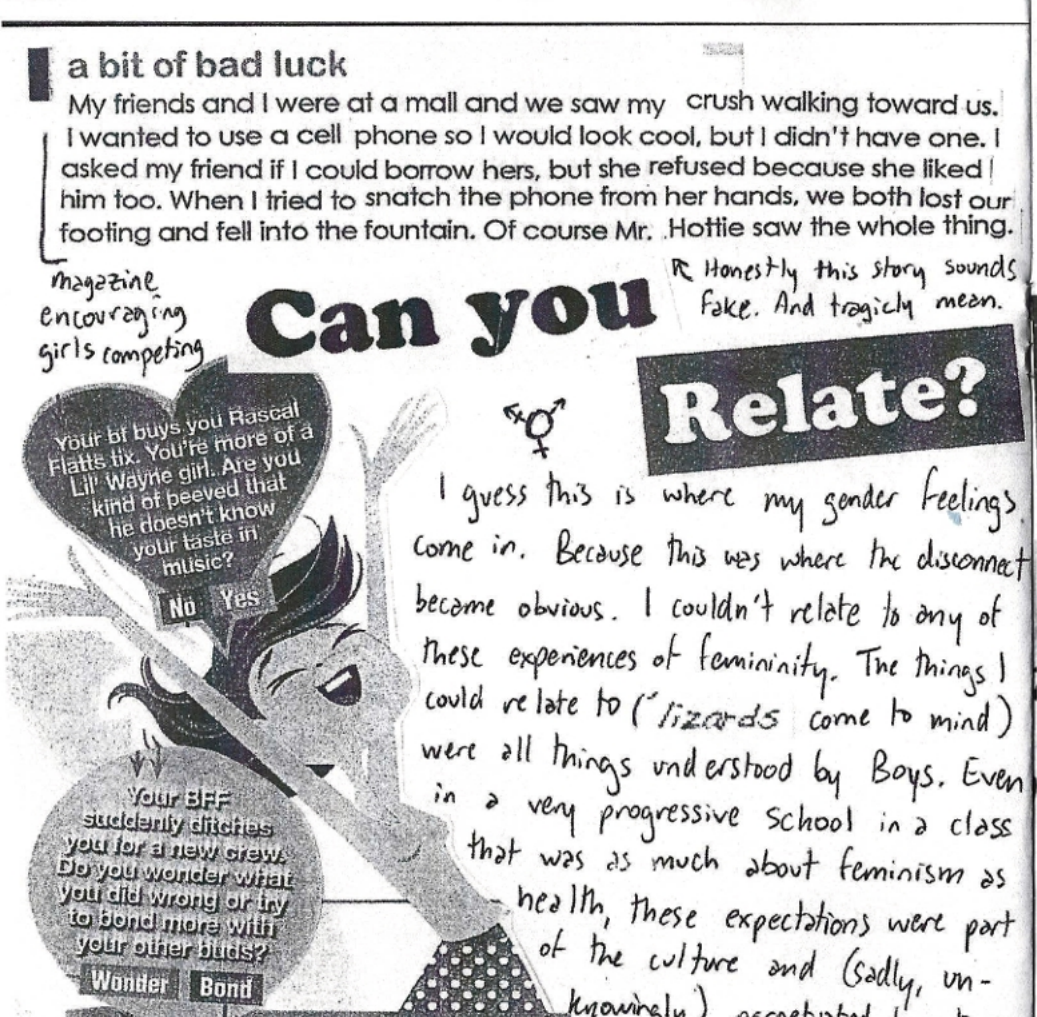
My friends and I were at a mall and we saw my crush walking toward us. I wanted to use a cell phone so I would look cool, but I didn't have one. I asked my friend if I could borrow hers, but she refused because she liked him too. When I tried to snatch the phone from her hands, we both lost our footing and fell into the fountain. Of course Mr. Hottie saw the whole thing.

Honestly this story sounds fake. And tragicly mean.

magazine encouraging girls competing

Can you Relate?

I guess this is where my gender feelings come in. Because this was where the disconnect became obvious. I couldn't relate to any of these experiences of femininity. The things I could relate to ("lizards come to mind") were all things understood by Boys. Even in a very progressive school in a class that was as much about feminism as health, these expectations were part of the culture and (sadly, unknowingly) perpetuated by the students.



Demanding Date

If a guy wants to hold a primo place in your heart, he has to earn it. Like Rihanna, you have zero patience for guys who give anything less than 100 percent—if that makes you high-maintenance, so be it. While it's cool that you won't settle, make sure you're not treating him like a doormat. He's your bf, after all!

cancer

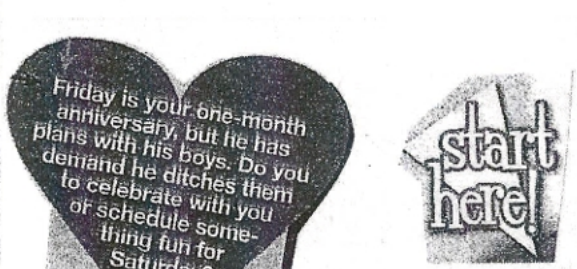
june 22–july 23

life: Change is a big theme, but fear not because it's the exciting kind. Even if it involves home or school, you'll be happy. You could get something you've dreamed about, just remember talking things out can help overcome most obstacles.

cuties: Someone may bring an attractive new guy right to your doorstep. But you will have some big choices to make. November is likely to get spicy.

treat: A spa day or at least a mani/pedi.

The magazine is saying "spicy"



start here!

are you a good flirt?

mostly As

flirting failure

Maybe you don't want to be a flirt, and that's cool—it's not every girl's game. Or, could it be that the boys just automatically flock to you and you don't need to sweat it? That's fine, too. But if you're not flirting because you wouldn't even know how to begin, start with the basics. See "Flirting tips" for some pointers.

mostly Bs

shy, but trying

The "cute and shy" act may work sometimes, but guys get bored by it. You need to figure out how to not be embarrassed. It's not easy to be a master flirt, but once you figure it out it's superfun. Check out our tips, or watch an expert and take notes. Next time, it'll be you who captures the boys' attention.

mostly Cs

confident and coy

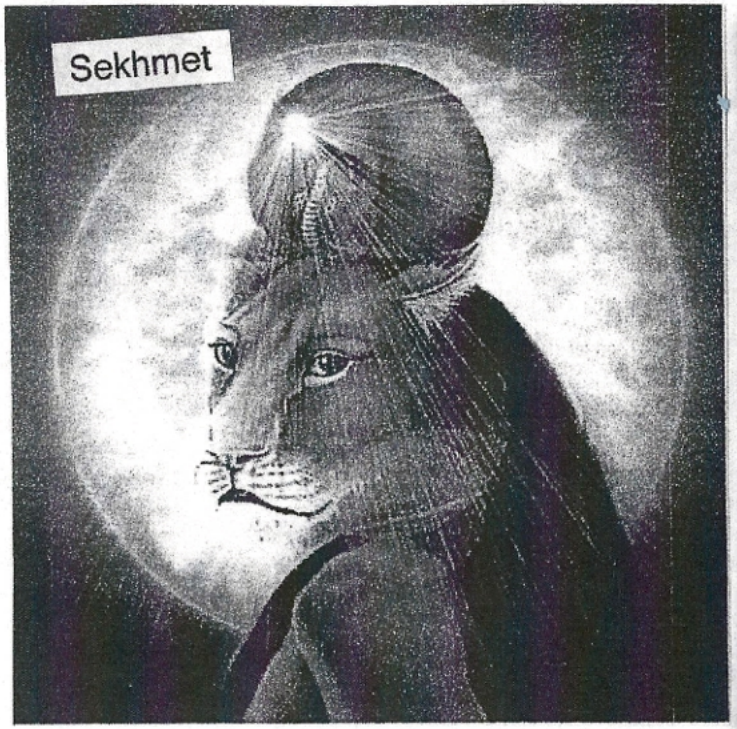
Kudos! You have major flirting skills, which will serve you well in the boy-getting game. It's great you aren't shy around dudes. Your confidence makes them feel comfortable around you. Just remember the rules: Don't flirt with your friends' crushes or with your boyfriend's buddies, and don't overdo it! Otherwise, keep working it.

silly shoes

I bought these really cute heels, but sometimes they made a "fart" sound when I walked. They were so cute though, I didn't care and wore them to the school dance anyway. As I walked past my crush, my shoes wer "frrrt!" He started laughing, and I swore to never wear those shoes again.

In hindsight it really sucks that this was the culture the others were part of. Being trained to flirt and wear heels and break each other when 14 year olds should be getting grass stains.

My submission was about mythological goddesses. I couldn't relate to the experience of femininity, but the archetypes of femininity was more accessible. I guess I had an easier time seeing myself in fictional, historic figures, stories that felt so fantastical and far away.



Isis

Isis was the most worshipped goddess in Egypt. She was thought of as the Mother goddess, the matron of magic, the friend of slaves, and she listened to the women's prayers and answered them. She was the first daughter of Geb and Nut. Her brother and hubby is Osiris, who is the mightiest of all gods and decides what to do with truthful souls. Her son is Horus. When Osiris was killed, she and her sister restored him. This gained her much respect, and actually helped women become a bigger part of Egypt.

Saraswati

Saraswati is the four-armed goddess of knowledge and the arts. She is the first goddess to be worshipped in Hinduism. Being wise and creative, Saraswati is supposedly the perfect match for the lord of creation, Brahma. But they had a disastrous marrage. Brahma is the god of creation, Saraswati is his daughter. He was put off by Saraswati's lack of affection (being both his daughter and wife) and kicked her out of his house and disinherited her. For this he could no longer be worshipped. Saraswati learned to channel her anger into meditation and stay peaceful. She symbolizes the independent woman. She is most often seen playing her veena, which is a stringed instrument, and with a peacock or a swan alongside her.

If Barbie was a Real woman...

The only other page I really liked was, of course, Dom's. It was more of a critique on society than something meant to represent me.

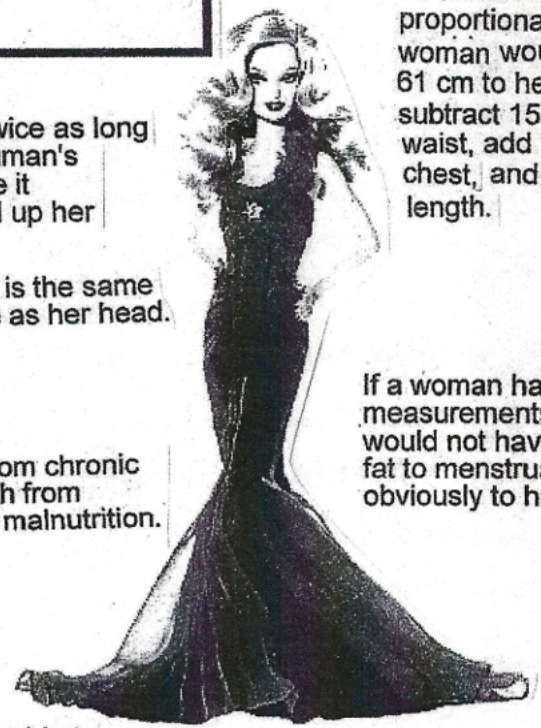
Barbie's Measurements:
Height: 7'2"
Weight: 101 lbs.
Dress size: 4
Bust: 39" (FF cup)
Waist: 19" (same as her head)
Hips: 33"
Shoe size: 5

Barbie's body would have room for only half of a liver and only a few inches of intestines, as opposed to the usual 26 feet.

To look like a Barbie doll proportionally, a healthy woman would need to add 61 cm to her height, subtract 15 cm from her waist, add 13 cm to her chest, and 8 to her neck length.

Barbie's neck is twice as long as the average human's which would make it impossible to hold up her head.

Barbie's waist is the same circumference as her head.



If a woman had the same measurements as Barbie, she would not have enough body fat to menstruate (and obviously to have children).

She would suffer from chronic diarrhoea and death from malabsorption and malnutrition.

Barbie would be unable to walk upright; she would need to walk on all fours.

Barbie's legs are 50% longer than her arms, whereas the average woman's legs are only 20% longer than her arms.

Her feet are so proportionately small that her chest would pull her perpetually forward onto her

The climax of my OMGdess experience was The Play. Towards the end of the semester, the class was going downtown to see a play for a field trip. It was a comedy about women's issues and liberation; I don't remember much about it except that the whole thing was a two-woman show and it was pretty darn good. The class had been doing fundraisers throughout the semester to raise the money to go. We all took a bus to get there after school, but we'd have to arrange our own transport back.

I didn't want to go in the first place. I'd been having a rough few days at home and wasn't excited about having to spend time with the girls in class. But I pulled it together.

After school, when the class was already out there, I called my mom to check in. She said she expected me to figure out my own way home (we lived about 40 minutes from there with no bus routes). When I asked how, she said to talk to the other kids and arrange a carpool. When I said I wasn't comfortable with that (and she knew they bullied/rejected me), she said to get over it and stop being a baby. I asked what if people didn't give me a ride, and she said to only drag her out there as a last resort.

So I spent the entire evening completely petrified. These kids already didn't like me, and now I was supposed to ask them a favor. I asked one girl (don't remember which) and she said they lived in the other direction (which I found out later was a lie). I asked another who was much less subtle with her lie; she said she "didn't know where she lived", and when I asked if she knew how close she was to the school and if her mom might be able to take me there, she said there wouldn't be room for me in the car (which I soon found out was a lie as they drove one of those big ass SUVs.) At that point, I decided I was only embarrassing myself and called my mom to tell her they'd all said no.

There were a few other incidents that night. When we were asked to buddy up to sit at the tables for the play, I was the last one standing with Rachael, who said "Guess I'm stuck with you" and about ten minutes in moved her chair to some other group and left me alone. While waiting for the shuttle to the meeting/pickup point we did a "Have you ever" game, and whenever it was my turn and I hadn't done something they all groaned, muttered "virgin" (regardless of the thing I hadn't done) and sometimes threw a wadded-up napkin at me. In hindsight the teachers really should have done something.

It all peaked when we got to the meeting point. Our shuttle (a city shuttle that took people along one long street) had

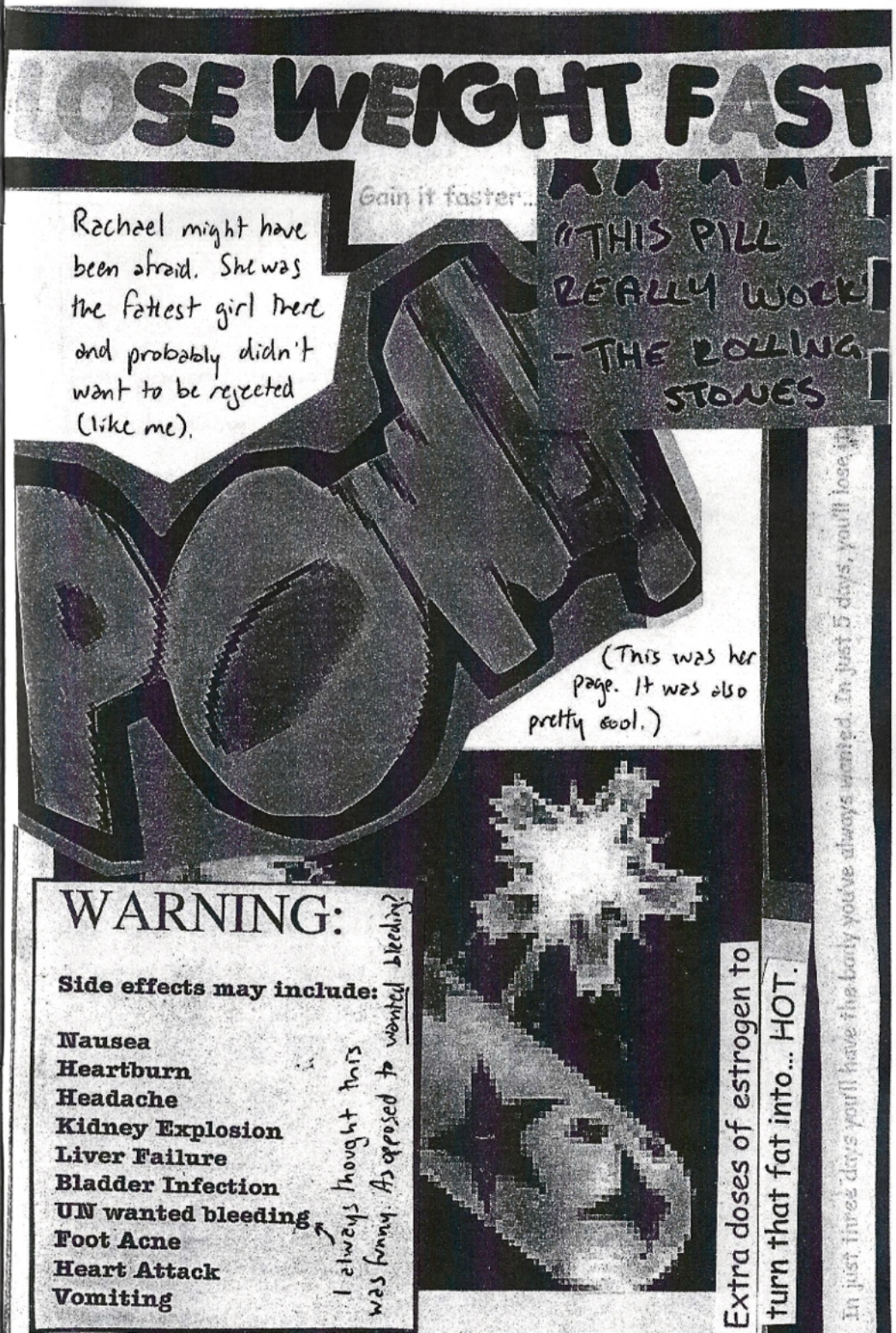
My mom put on a friendly face in front of the teachers and other parents, but as soon as we were in the car she snapped. She screamed at me for the entire 40 minute drive and for two hours after. She was pissed about having to drive down there, pissed we were late, but even more pissed that apparently I could've arranged a carpool. She'd been talking with one of the other moms while we were on our way, and guess what? She lived five minutes from our house and would've been happy to drive me back.

She was also the mom of the girl who told me she "didn't know where she lived."

I tried to explain all this, that I asked the girls but they didn't like me and lied to me. My mom was having none of it, even though I still had bits of napkin in my hair.

It's funny that we tell victims to feel sorry for bullies because they might have a bad home life, but we never tell bullies that their victims might be attacked enough at home. I doubt they'd have been any different even if they knew my mom was abusive.

That night was the first time I ever felt suicidal, or at least the first time I remember. It wasn't the other girls' fault exactly... but they sure didn't help.



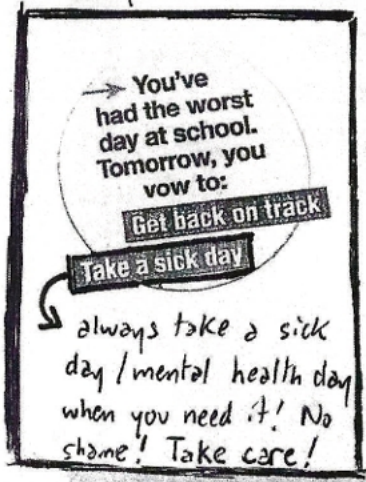
If you're wondering why I was suicidal at [redacted] just had to write cuz it. -Later.

[NAME REDACTED]

me?

↑ from my old journal

Sometimes I wonder if I was just being a baby like my mom said. Others have been bullied much worse, I turned out okay, etc. But you know what, that's crap. Things hurt, man. Middle school sucks for a lot of reasons and for me this was one of them. And if I can't feel compassionate for myself then who will?



always take a sick day / mental health day when you need it! No shame! Take care!

Did you have a crappy class? Were you excluded and rejected by your class? Were you subjected to bullying from anyone, large or small or physical or emotional? This is me saying you didn't deserve it. Make a zine about it, send me an email to process. And flip everyone else off because they suck anyway

If you chose mostly a's...
You might wanna consider getting a new BFF! This relationship might not be the best friendship for you. You also could sit down with your BFF and have a one on one talk about her behavior. Be nice!

If you chose mostly b's...
You have a pretty good friend... but she could be a bit more considerate. She seems to not get how delicate feelings are, maybe you should tell her how you feel and how you want to be treated!

If you chose mostly c's...
You have a GREAT BFF! She knows how to treat you and cares about your feelings! She seems like a good listener and would never put you in a sticky situation! Yay for you!

I was in a weird in-between state back then. I didn't relate to the other girls because I wasn't a girl. I didn't relate to crushes and "cuties" because I didn't want to be with them, I wanted to be them.

[redacted] cuties: A budding romance could become so much more, and he may be every bit as surprised as you! This will be a really fun time.

And although I related more to the boys, it wasn't perfect either because no one (not even I) thought I was one of them.

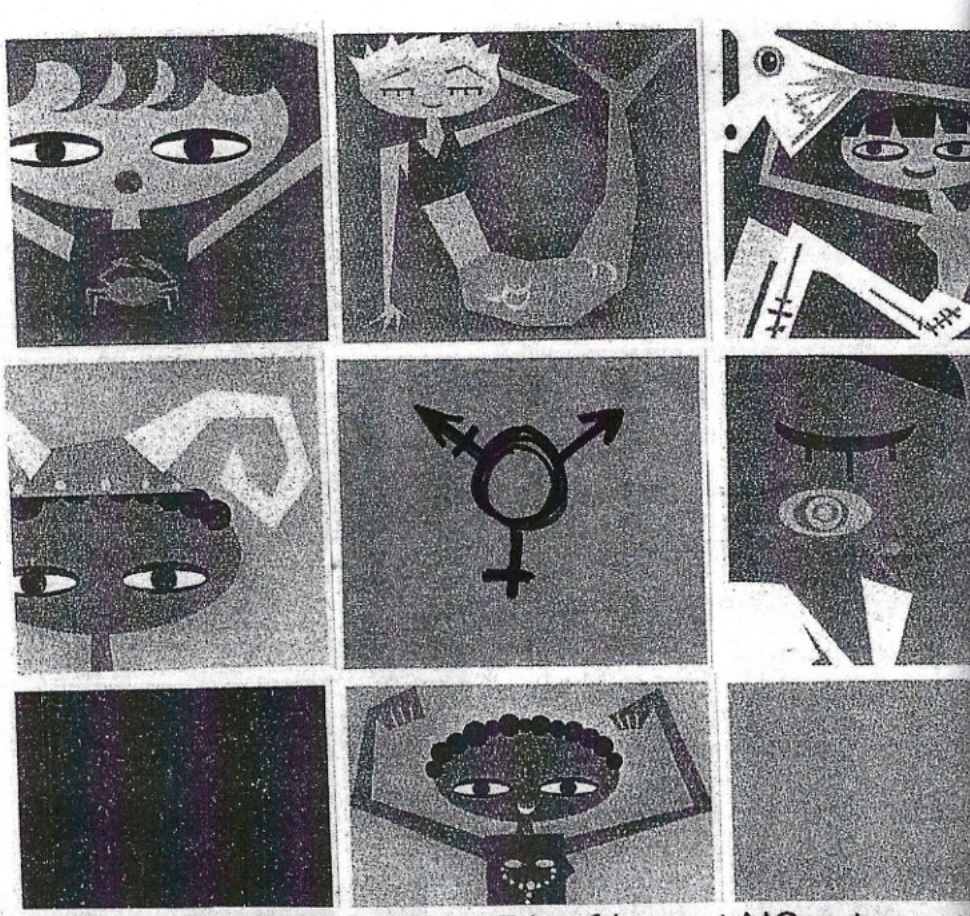
[redacted] Expect an attraction to a nice, caring guy. A hottie also might be in the picture, just be sure his heart is in the right place before you pass over Mr. Nice.

You know what's funny? One of these "cuties" horoscopes from our zine actually captures me pretty well. This is my trans experience as explained by a teen girl mag:

cuties: Look to meet a hot new prospect (and we do mean hot) through buds. You're not completely open about this guy, though—check your motives.

↑ And I did meet him... 4 years later.





Wesley Sveker Twenty Two Zines Summer 2020

twentytwozines@gmail.com
twentytwozines.storenvy.com