

## Friendship/Bracelets.

For E.

I started the tedious endeavor of making my own friendship bracelet yesterday. I never was patient enough as a child to brave the art of tying orderly knots over and over again.

E was.

Every summer when the air was sticky and smelled like honeysuckle, we would sit on woven plastic seats clothed in red cushions on her dad's patio. She perched gracefully, one muscular ballerina leg on top of the other: contorting her limbs to fit her whole self on the chair.

While Dr. Trew was mowing his lawn and Bryce Johnson was swimming in his pool and I was watching Stranger Things, E gathered thread, secured it to a Washi Tape covered clipboard and wove vibrant accessories. Anklets, keychains, bracelets. Chevron, candy cane, diamonds. I failed to understand her obsession. But I admired her willingness to act on her obsession: something I struggled with trudging through the cesspool of adolescence. She seemed to brave it beautifully; she never made it known that the pressures of the world were wounding her soul.

She taught me how to do a pirouette in her kitchen. She taught me how to draw winged eyeliner along my eyelashes. She taught me how to insert a tampon.

*Does it hurt?* I asked sitting on her beige toilet.

*It shouldn't. If it does, just pause and take a breath.*

*E, what if I put it up there too far?*

*Then I'll pull it out for you.*

She did: splotches of crimson on the cotton.

When I turned fifteen, she rendered me a bewitching chevron bracelet: green, white and purple.

Green, white, and purple: colors that epitomize her.

Green: the color of the grass we laid on; side by side in her front yard.

White: the color of the bathroom tiles we painted our tiny toenails on with scarlet nail polish.  
The color of the snow we sledded in at the end of February, creating rogue cuts in the untouched snow.

Purple: the color of the streaks in her hair. The color of her toothbrush. The color of the room she slit her wrists in with a pencil sharpener.

I tied that bracelet onto my left wrist. So many knots. They stacked up like the clothing I left in her room.

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Her attempt didn't succeed. The universe's attempt to end our friendship didn't succeed.

*I'm doing nerdy shit. I'm majoring in anthropology and right now I want to be an archivist,* she texted me two weeks ago.

She wants to work in museums. She wants to preserve and teach people about art. She wants to recognize the forgotten legacies. She wants to spend her career in places where people retreat: to study the works of other people who were as attentive to their work as she was when knotting her strands of thread.

*You've always loved art,* I texted back, my bracelet secure around the wrist of my trembling hand.

*She's been found.*