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## Emerge

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Payne: Emerge

I stopped looking into her eyes, and stared straight ahead, into blank space. "Because I don't like you."

Yet, for some reason, despite all that I had done, I couldn't shake the feeling that what I said was wrong. So there, at that point, I dabbed my vocal pen and wrote out the final words of our relationship into the air, to her, "No . . . it's because *you're you.*"

She let go of me. She got up. She walked away.

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Again, she wasn't at school the next day, or the day after that. But this time, she didn't return the third day, or the fourth day, or the fifth day. Neither the next week nor the week after that, neither the next

month nor the month after that, led to any appearance of my number-one fan, my pseudo-girlfriend. Soon the school year had ended and she had not returned. I never heard a tat from her again.

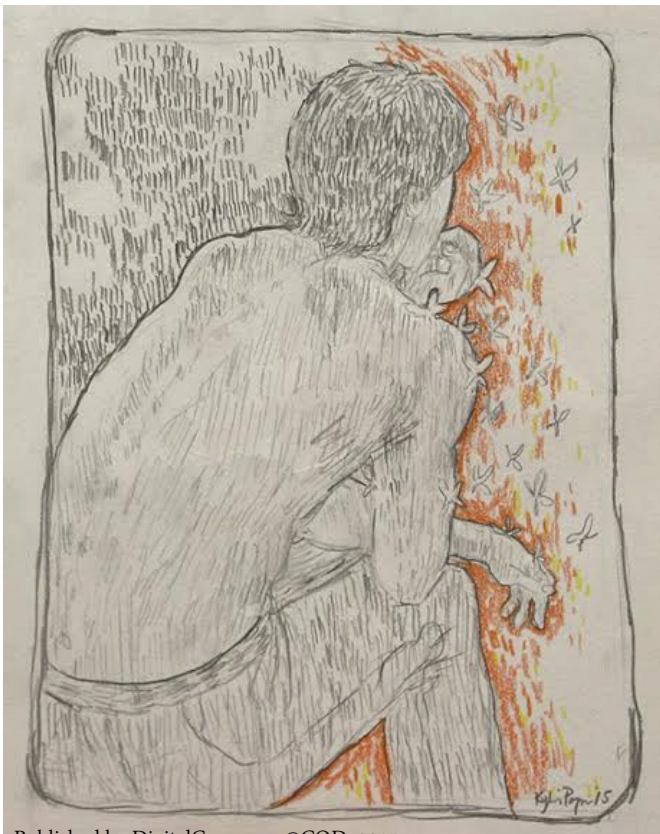
And during those days, in those hushed halls, outside of a few offhand remarks, nobody said a word about her. Except for Edgar. He took it the hardest. For a few weeks after her final disappearance he just sat there at our lunch table, hunched over, his face burrowed within his crossed arms. He really liked her. At least I think he did.

And what about me?

How do I feel?

I feel a lot.

And sometimes I wonder about her.



**Emerge**  
**Graphite and colored**  
**pencil drawing**  
*Kylie Payne*