
SHE'S MY LITTLE COUSIN

SARAH RAMSEY

I don't remember when she was born,
But I remember when she was small enough,
To toddle around in a little puffy dress,
With Mary Jane shoes,
And a cute little pixie cut.

She's my little cousin.

I knew her parents' divorce was tricky,
But I didn't know how emotionally difficult it was on her,
When she hid behind couches,
Taking solace in cookies,
Hugging her knees tight,
To escape the sound of banging doors.

She's my little cousin.

I knew she was more overweight than I was as a kid,
I didn't know that she knew,
And that she felt guilt, shame, and ugly because of it.

She's my little cousin.

I had my own issues,
Starving and lying,
I took solace in control,
Hugging my knees tight,
To escape the sound of my own negative voices
She didn't know.

She's my little cousin.

I finally told her,
How I used to strive for emptiness,
To weigh nothing,
To feel nothing,
But this didn't solve anything.

She finally told me,
How she used to strive for fullness,
To eat something,
To feel nothing,
But this didn't solve anything.

She's my little cousin.

I told her,
One day,
You will be able to feel full,
Not because of the cookies you ate behind the couch,
Not because of the glasses of water I used to chug,
But because you will look at yourself in the mirror,
And see the beautiful, strong, smart girl that I see.

One day,
You will be able to feel something,
Because you decide you are done,
You will let go of your knees,
And get out from behind the couch.

It takes time,
It took me a while to realize that.

The doors will always bang,
The cookies will always be there,
But they don't solve anything.

She's my little cousin.