

# DEAR READERS, WRITERS, AND ARTISTS,

(YOU CAN BE ALL THREE!)

We were thinking of you as we were deciding upon our theme for this issue. Every day, we know you try your best to find your voice and find ways to express it. This is not as easy as it may look and is especially challenging when you are young and still trying to figure yourself out. 'Do I like Taylor Swift's new album or am I just convincing myself I do since everyone around me is raving about it? Who am I? What do I value, what makes ME happy? Why do some things scare me that don't seem to bother my peers? Am I OK?'

Yes, you are OK. You are more than OK! All the questions and concerns swirling around in your head are an important, even essential part of growing up. They help you discover your authentic self and assist you in deciding what kind of person you want to be. Grown-ups continue to ask themselves these questions. Defining ourselves is a lifelong journey for us all, but much more intense when you are a young and kind of a new-ish person.

So when I said we were thinking about you, we were considering how courageous you are, each and every day, as you navigate school responsibilities, peer relationships, family relationships, achievements and disappointments, welcome challenges that come your way, and those you'd wish hadn't presented themselves at all. We are so proud of you and are thrilled when you bravely let yourself be known through writing, making visual art, making music, dancing, or engaging in the dramatic arts, and so much more.

Keep creating bravely as you do, knowing that self-expression is a meaningful part of your personal journey of self-discovery. Hold on tight and enjoy the ride!

Your fan,



Nancy Marsh; Senior Editor