

# INTIMATELY HUMAN: AN EXPLORATION OF MEMOIR WRITING

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## Sample work

From My Daughter Shuyo, a magical realism piece:

In the morning I have trouble breathing. There is the thick odor of rain and sweat soaked sheets as her body presses against my spine. She writhes beneath the flesh of my belly, eager to claw her way out and discard me like a used cocoon. There is a warm, sticky sensation between my thighs. I put a hand on my vagina and feel the soft tissue of her head. I should call for an ambulance. I feel for the phone underneath my pillow. I slowly punch in the numbers 9-1-1 and wait.

The phone rings twice before someone picks up.

I tell them I am having a baby, and there is no response. Only a deliberate static behind the phone, like a cry for help from an operator who had suddenly fainted, or someone concealing a conversation that was happening in the background. Either way, whoever they were did not feel the need to speak to me.

From “growing softer”, a chapter in my memoir:

I did not give birth to you, my mother tells me. You fought me tooth and claw. You threw yourself into the world, she says. When she tells me I am fierce and relentless, I hear only fear. Her voice is the one I stole exiting the womb, my existence forcing the spaces between her words to grow unceasingly.

I was a little over four pounds at birth. War-like, a tumor fighting against the body it's derived from.

Once, I tried a sour tamarind candy you bought from the Asian supermarket, rolling the soft brown paste around my mouth until my lips puckered. I rubbed the waxy wrapper and stared at the blue china pattern etched in its crumpled surface.

## Awards and recognitions

Ringling College- 2 honorable mentions

Published in *The Interlochen Review*

Scholastic Art and Writing Awards- gold key

## My sources

Hardy, Matt. “Ocean Ripple.” *Unsplash*,  
[unsplash.com/photos/6ArTTluciuA](https://unsplash.com/photos/6ArTTluciuA).

**“again, the wave  
returned to  
the ocean. and again,  
and again.”**

## RACHEL SUN

Impression of *Us*: a memoir

My memoir, written for AAR, has been a journey of tremendous growth, both as a writer and as a human being. The memoir, stemming from an attempt to answer my own questions, weaves together the end of a relationship with memories from childhood to explore themes related to recklessness, instability, and independence.

## Things I've Learned

- I began calling myself a 'writer' and acknowledging the fact that writing was something that I could commit time to.
- I realized quickly that being a writer is never as easy as “I'm going to write a book, and then I'm going to publish it.”
- I also realized that not every literary journal or magazine is for me; the main criteria I have to consider before submitting is the age group they take submissions from, the categories they accept, and the word count limits. Typically, I look at previous winners or published entries to determine if the writing they publish is my style.
- I started reading from a writing perspective instead of a reading perspective, taking note of the sentence structure and metaphors.
- I started exploring different types of writing, branching out from creative nonfiction to magical realism and screenplays.
- I developed something of a routine for writing. I start by writing out everything that I can possibly think of, and then I talk to myself to figure out what message the whole piece should convey and which parts I should add or delete to achieve that goal.
- I found it to be really helpful to talk to others about my writing to bounce my ideas off of them; at the same time, it was important for me to be confident in my writing.

## Onto the future

- I will be submitting to more contests/publication opportunities and embracing myself as a writer.
- I've started *Anser Journal*, an online literary journal, with a friend and will continue to build upon that project, which can be found at [anserjournal.org](http://anserjournal.org)
- I will continue to work on and reflect upon this memoir; I'm sure in a couple years, maybe even next year, I will look at this project, at my mindset, with a completely different perspective.
- Recently, I've been fascinated with non-standard structures of prose and I will be experimenting with ways to get even more creative with my writing.

