

A FRIEND I DID NOT WANT

Elizabeth Smith POETRY

A friend I did not want,
Tears poured down like a storm in the Gulf Coast,
At fourteen years of age I never could predict,
A chair, big wheels on its side, would be the friend I
need,

I rejected it,
Others close to me did as well,
Mom not once, though,

This friend accompanied me along my journey,
Grocery stores, concerts, ballets, countless places,
Sitting there, that spinning twister and hot air
balloon did not go off into the sky,
The horses stayed in their stable,
Those symptoms stayed manageable, like a dog who
listens on command,

Still, I rejected it,
Years, I would not get the little blue parking sticker,
Others close to me as well could not accept,
Mom did not reject once, though,

At seventeen I went for a fitting
For a new chair to be a friend; more custom to me,
Physical therapist measured my stance,
I chose the color, Tangerine Metallic, so the sun
would follow with me,
'Might as well embrace the difference,' I said,

*I am a rising senior, majoring in Music with a minor in Communication. I consider myself an advocate for disability rights, women's empowerment, and the protection of children. When I was sixteen, I published a fiction novel that intertwines my own story of injustices as lost souls in a fiction world are drifting along the sea, hoping to find their way back to the real world. I have been published in *Brushing* as well as *The Independent*. I am currently an intern for the KEM Hospital Research Center in Pune, India, where I continue to advocate for the causes I am passionate about. Furthermore, this poem creatively describes my journey toward acceptance of being disabled. It personifies the wheelchair as a friend I did not want, but the relationship changes as the poem moves forward.*