

*The Familiar Pinch - Cystic Fibrosis Chronicles*

Rowan O'Bryan's project, *The Familiar Pinch - Cystic Fibrosis Chronicles*, combines photography and creative writing in a book that explores the daily lives of young girls living with Cystic Fibrosis (CF). Rowan has CF herself, which is a rare genetic and progressive disease that mainly impacts the respiratory and digestive systems. To create the book, Rowan connected with four girls aged twelve to nineteen through her social workers at UCLA and Childrens Hospital Los Angeles. She provided each participant with a digital camera, and encouraged them to take daily photos as well as journal reflections on their personal experience as someone with a chronic illness. The final product is a cohesive 100 page book compiling the girls' entries over a three week period. Instead of presenting the content as a collection of individual pieces, the book aims to create a seamless flow where the images and writing harmoniously intertwine to form a unified body of work.

Building friendships within the CF community is an important objective of this book. CF is an isolating disease. It's very rare, affecting only 30,000 people in the US, and often takes the lives of patients at a young age. CF patients are also strongly recommended not to meet each other in-person due to health risks. This can often lead to a profound sense of loneliness. Rowan hopes the girls were able to use their contributions to explore these complex emotions as well as foster meaningful connections between each other.

Overall, Rowan's goal for the participants was to give them a platform to explore themselves amongst others who experience life with an illness. She wanted the exercise of reflection to inspire an understanding that CF is not something to be ashamed of, but is rather a unique factor of their identity. By sharing their perspectives through art, she hopes to raise awareness and promote a greater understanding of what it means to live with CF.