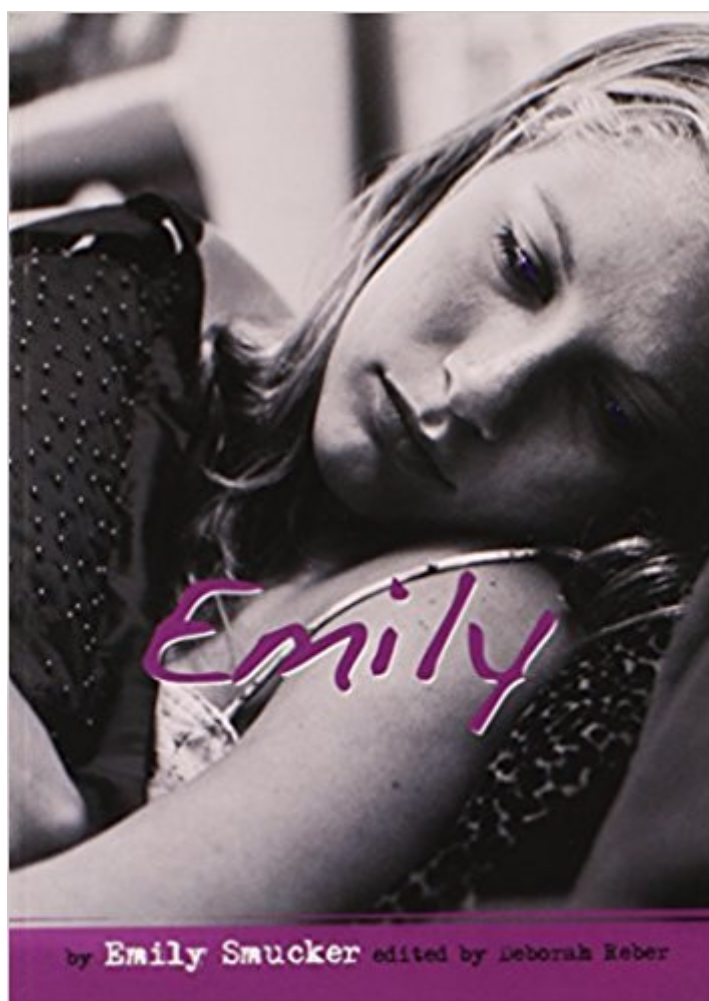


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# Emily: My True Story Of Chronic Illness And Missing Out On Life (Louder Than Words)



## Synopsis

Emily's the sick one . . . all of the time. Plagued with some sort of cold or fever or bizarre aches and pains for much of her life, Emily thought the dizziness and stomachaches at the start of her senior year were just another bout of "Emily flu." But when they didn't go away, she knew something was seriously wrong. Eventually diagnosed with the rare and incurable West Nile virus, Emily watched her senior year and the future she had planned for go up in smoke. "I want a normal life for a teenager. I want to ache from a long day at work. I want to be so busy that I don't have time to post on my blog. I want to run the race of life instead of being pushed along it in a wheelchair. I want to be on the ride of my life, you know?" *Because Truth Is More Fascinating Than Fiction*

## Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Emily Smucker loves to write. She keeps a regular diary and takes a notebook with her everywhere she goes. Emily is a Mennonite and born-again Christian, and considers her heroes to be Peter Parker, Hadassah, and Luke Skywalker, because they made the right choice and it changed the world. She loves dreams, Dr. Pepper, badminton, watching people, making movies, and unlike 99.5% of Mennonite girls in America, not coffee or scrapbooking. Her online blog can be found at <http://www.xanga.com/SupergirlEmzel>.

August 2007  
Three Wishes If you had the chance to have three wishes (no wishing for more wishes), what would they be and why? Okay, I admit, it would be easy to think of three easy answers: 1. That I would never get sick again. 2. That I would never get homework in the coming school year. 3. A nicer video camera. It's also quite easy to get whatever your heart desires in three wishes, despite the whole 'no wishing for more wishes' deal. You could wish: 1. That there would be no more suffering. 2. That whatever we wanted would appear like magic at the snap of our fingers. 3. That everyone would live happily ever after. See? You could get everything in three wishes. Oh, whatever. So I think the question is dumb. Who ever listens to me anyway? Maybe I'd better go take my temperature to see if it's gone down a fraction of an inch yet, and go lie in bed where I belong.

A Feeling I've been having annoying stomachaches lately. Sunday evening I had another one. So I sat out the whole church service, sipping tea and reciting Isaiah 40 to myself. I always recite Isaiah 40 to myself when I have stomachaches. It is very comforting. I felt better by the time the service was over. My siblings and I went to our cousins Justin and Stephy's house, where we played soccer, ate food, and then just sat around while the guys played a game. It was during that time I began to know I was probably getting sick, because there is a certain feeling you get when you are getting sick. It's not just headache and sore throat - it's a sort of woozy feeling. When we finally got home, which took a long time due to my brother Matt's game playing, I took my temperature and had a sky-high fever. Arg zarg. I don't want to be sick again. How will this affect my plans? At least it's happening now, and not during school.

Plans We were having a normal youth function at my church - sitting around, talking, and having fun. We were mostly talking about what to do for a fundraiser. Should we do another slave auction, where kids from the youth group get auctioned off as slaves and have to do their owner's bidding for the day (within reason, of course)? That was the only idea anyone threw out, even though no one seemed to like it very much. Then Phebe said, 'I think Emily should write a play for us to perform.' A murmur of approval and a nodding of heads swept through the room. I glowed. A play! Could I actually write a play? I've written skits before. Actually, I usually just make them up and tell people what to do so I don't have to bother with scripts. But could I write a whole play? 'Okay, I'll do it,' I said. I'm gonna write a play! And the youth group is gonna - perform it!

Wow, I have so many things planned for this year. I want to take college algebra at the community college, because I don't think I'm smart enough for advanced math, but I want to take some math this year. Plus, then I'll get some, you know, college experience. I also want to get a job, because I can finally drive. And I'm going to be a senior, and at my school, that means I don't have to be in school full time. Oh yeah, and there is the little fact that I need money. Somewhere, Mom found out about some community writing classes, and I think it

would be so much fun to take one with her. Oh, and now that I can drive, I can finally see if I can find some community theater or something to participate in. I'm tired of knowing nothing about drama other than what I make up. This year I'm also probably going to be yearbook editor. I mean, Justin and I are the only ones who even know how to put pages together, and he was editor last year. And now, this play! I'll probably have to direct it too, because who besides me can direct a play? Well, J. D. can, but I don't think he would really want to direct my play. I'll probably be put in charge of costumes too. I can't wait! Wow. Yes, I know that is a lot. I'll probably have to drop something. Or several things. Still, I am looking forward to being busy for once. Now I just need to get over this dumb sickness and get started! ©2009. Emily Smucker. All rights reserved. Reprinted from Emily. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, without the written permission of the publisher. Publisher: Health Communications, Inc., 3201 SW 15th Street, Deerfield Beach, FL 33442

Highly recommended for children dealing with chronic illness. Very honest and accurate portrayal. Although I am an adult living with lupus, even I could resonate with her story. Highly recommended.

HCI's Louder Than Words series features stories about serious issues from real teens who have experienced them. Emily Smucker was looking forward to her senior year in high school before being diagnosed with the rare and incurable West Nile virus. After that she never feels good, but still manages to move toward a positive future. Emily is a Mennonite, which adds an interesting layer of faith questions and an unusual setting for her story. Taken from Emily's blog during her long period of illness, her account will draw readers in to her plight as well as her strong spirit. Senior year was supposed to be awesome. Emily was going to produce a play, film lots of movies, take some courses at the community college, maybe get a job, and enjoy her new driver's license. A flu seems to be plaguing her, but then she has always caught lots of bugs. Her father is a teacher at the Mennonite school, which only has 32 students, so any absence is a big deal. Emily keeps going to school whenever she feels even a little ok. Soon the days when she feels even a little ok are rare. Her mother takes her for a battery of blood tests that sometimes get lost or are inconclusive. One doctor finally thinks she has the West Nile virus. Each time she starts feeling even a little better, she lapses back into periods of hazy illness when she can't even think straight to do homework. Instead of looking forward to a year of achievement and fun, she is now worried about graduation. She is left out of the school Christmas play, then the family spring trip, and finds it harder to keep her spirits up. A trip to a sister in North Carolina helps a bit, but the illness comes back strong at times. Using a

cane becomes a must. Emily's writing shows a sense of humor, a love of her family, and a strong faith that help her through an impossible year. In the middle of being stuck in her bed for a long time, she will post funny blog entries about her room or her friends like a normal, healthy teen, turning this very serious story into an engaging read. The West Nile virus does eventually lessen its grip on victims who live through it, and Emily is able to begin piecing together a future, even if her senior year did not go according to her excited plans. Readers of EMILY will enjoy hearing about the brighter side of the tunnel. --- Reviewed by Amy Alessio

My sister handed me Emily's book, and said, "Happy Birthday!" I'm afraid I didn't get much work done that day, because I read the entire book. Emily writes with blunt honesty about the difficulty and the constant disappointments of living with a chronic illness. It was so descriptive that I felt like I should be weak and tired and sick afterwards! Her book helps me, as a disgustingly healthy person, to understand that it is not romantic and cool to be fragile and delicate and skinny, it is evidence that something is wrong! She lends her eyes to me for a few pages, and the world is completely different as I look through them. No doubt those who struggle with chronic illnesses would find this book encouraging. For an author of her age, it is well-written-- far better than what is typically expected of teen authors. I recommend this book!

Emily is plagued with some sort of cold, fever, or bizarre aches and pains for much of her life. Emily thought that the dizziness and stomachaches at the beginning of her senior year, were just another bout of "Emily Flu." But when it didn't go away, she knew that something was very wrong. After a tons of tests, she is eventually diagnosed with the rare and incurable West Nile virus. Emily watches her senior year and her future go up in smoke. I could relate to Emily's story. I have been sick for almost three years and didn't get answers for a long time. Emily was a great writer and I enjoyed her story. I think that anyone that has had a serious illness could relate to this. You should check it out either way.

This book was crazy! My name is Emily and i have had a chronic illness for a few years, my mom gave me this to read and help me maybe feel a little bit better. I guess she thought i would like being able to relate and realize i'm not the only one. But it was so weird to read! It was almost my exact story, i could practically know what would happen on the next page before reading it, I'm convinced someone has been stalking me and wrote a book about it. haha!

I worried a little before reading this, when I heard Emily had compiled blog posts and journal entries, along with new material, for her book. Some blogs can bog down in tedium at times. I joyfully discovered, though, Emily's talent for lively story-telling as she makes her way through happy moments and disappointments. Her book's pages truly become a narrative, with Emily as a character I came away feeling a connection with. She narrates against the backdrop of her home's setting and her family's loyal compassion for her throughout the months of her illness. I recommend getting to know this story of Emily, and I'm glad she could share it with truth, humor, and refreshing quirkiness.

I am a 50 something woman, and I found that age is no barrier to enjoying Emily's book. She has a wonderfully fresh voice. Her innate sense of humor made me laugh out loud. Her book feels so honest, sometimes painfully so. Anyone of any age who has suffered with a long term disease or disability will relate to Emily's journey. If you are a teen, or can remember being one, you may find a kindred spirit in Emily. I hope that this will be but the first of many books by this author.

A must read! I really enjoyed the book. Emily Smucker writes in such a way that one can feel what she's going through, whether it's discouragement about being sick, happiness about improvements of her health, or a funny story about something that happened to her. I found the book very encouraging as, though she faced many struggles and questions, she trusted God through it all.

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