

I am seeking representation for my 32k word middle grade contemporary, *What Stars Are Made Of*. This story will appeal to fans of R.J. Palacio, Kate Messner, and Gary Schmidt. I have been fortunate enough to work with Amanda Hill and Cindy Baldwin on this manuscript, and they recommended I send a query to you.

Libby (age twelve) has a rare genetic condition called Turner Syndrome. This means things like being born with an oversized heart, taking daily growth hormone shots, and not doing the monkey bars very well. But it doesn't mean she won't get an A+ in biology or be a scientist when she grows up.

Usually Libby doesn't think Turner Syndrome is that big of a deal, but then Libby's hero--her big sister--comes to town with a gigantic surprise: she's pregnant, and she's staying with the family while her husband finishes basic training. Libby knows all about the many things that can go wrong with a pregnancy (like miscarriages or genetic disorders and oversized hearts). So Libby makes a deal with her other hero, overlooked astronomer Cecilia Payne, who discovered what stars are made of. Libby imagines Cecilia as basically her guardian angel of science. Libby promises to bring Cecilia the credit she deserves by getting her into the next edition of their textbook, if Cecilia will take care of things from the other side. If she'll make sure the new baby is born safe, healthy, and perfect. With an Apgar score of ten. (A+ in biology, see?)

But if Libby's going to get these textbook people to take her seriously, she's going to need more creativity and tenacity than she's ever needed in her life. She won't give up, though, because failure means her sister could get hurt, maybe hurt bad. Failure means the baby could be born damaged or messed up. Like her.

I have been published in *The Evansville Review*, *Allegory*, *WritersDigest.com*, and have upcoming work in *Cicada* magazine. I also received an MFA from Brigham Young University. Like Libby, I was born with Turner Syndrome. (Hooray #ownvoices! And the daily shots actually weren't too bad.)

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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Middle Grade Author Sarah Allen and A Decade of Querying and Failing

Middle Grade Author Sarah Allen joins *Queries, Qualms, & Quirks* this week to discuss coming up in the time of author blogs, being over eager, hundreds of rejections, being scared to write the book you want, leaving an agent, learning to be bolder, and balancing the boldness with kindness.

Sarah Allen is a poet and author of books for young readers. Her upcoming middle grade horror, *THE NIGHTMARE HOUSE*, releases in August of 2023. Her first book, *WHAT STARS ARE*

MADE OF, was an ALA Notable Book of 2020 and Whitney Award Winner, and her second, BREATHING UNDERWATER, was a Jr. Library Guild Selection for 2021. Born and raised in Utah, she received an MFA in creative writing from Brigham Young University, and now lives in the midwest. She spends her non-writing time watching David Attenborough documentaries and singing show-tunes too loudly, and she's a lover of leather jackets, grizzly bears, and Colin Firth.

Sarah: [Query](#) | [Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [TikTok](#) | [Amazon](#) | [Bookshop](#) | [IndieBound](#) | [Libro FM](#)

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