



<http://www.geocities.com/soho/1234>



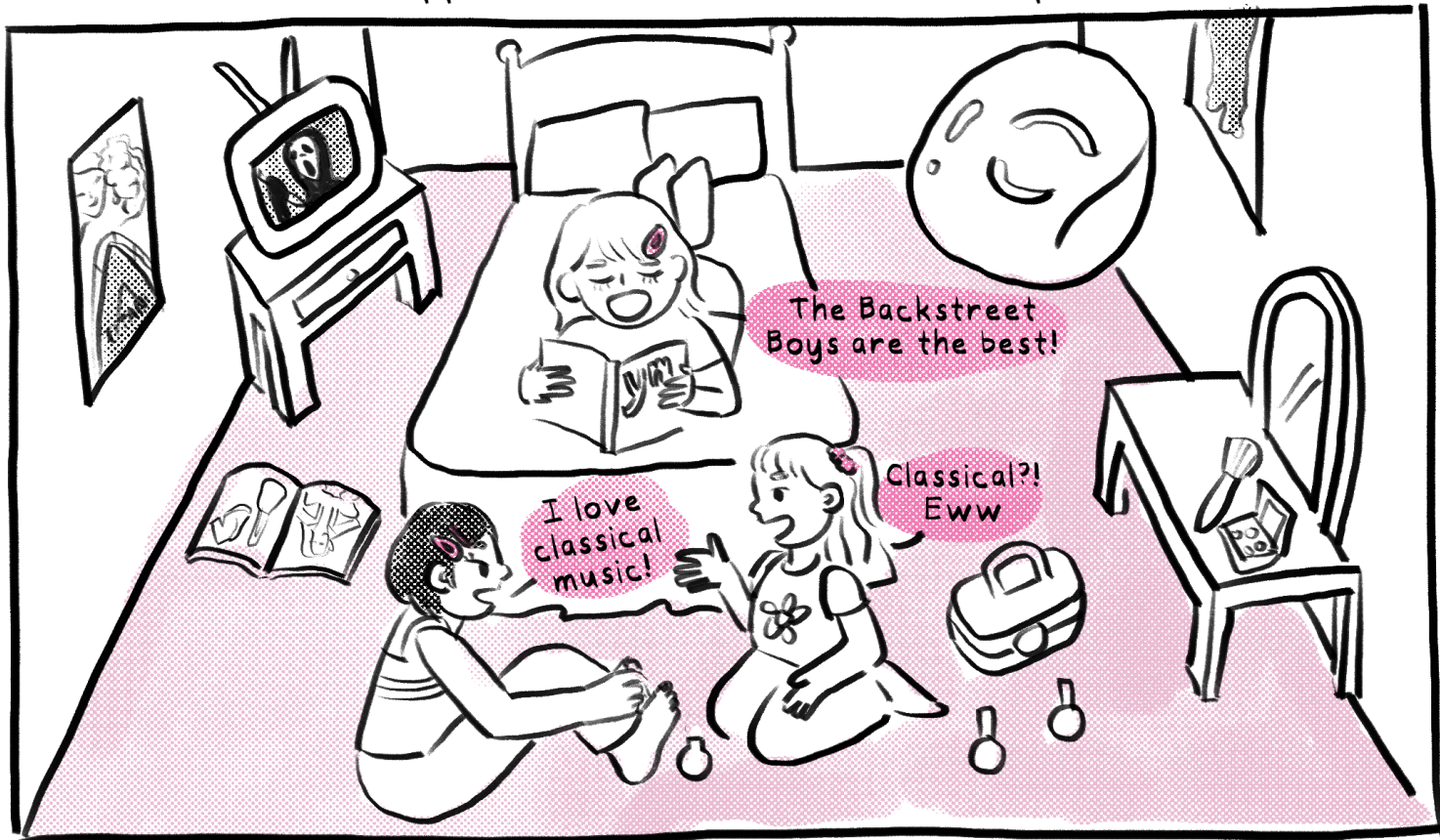
Home
Sweet
Homepage



by
Amy Wibowo

a comic
about growing
up online

It happens at a middle school sleepover.



My friends make fun of me for liking classical music.

I show them Vanessa-Mae's album to try to convince them it isn't boring.

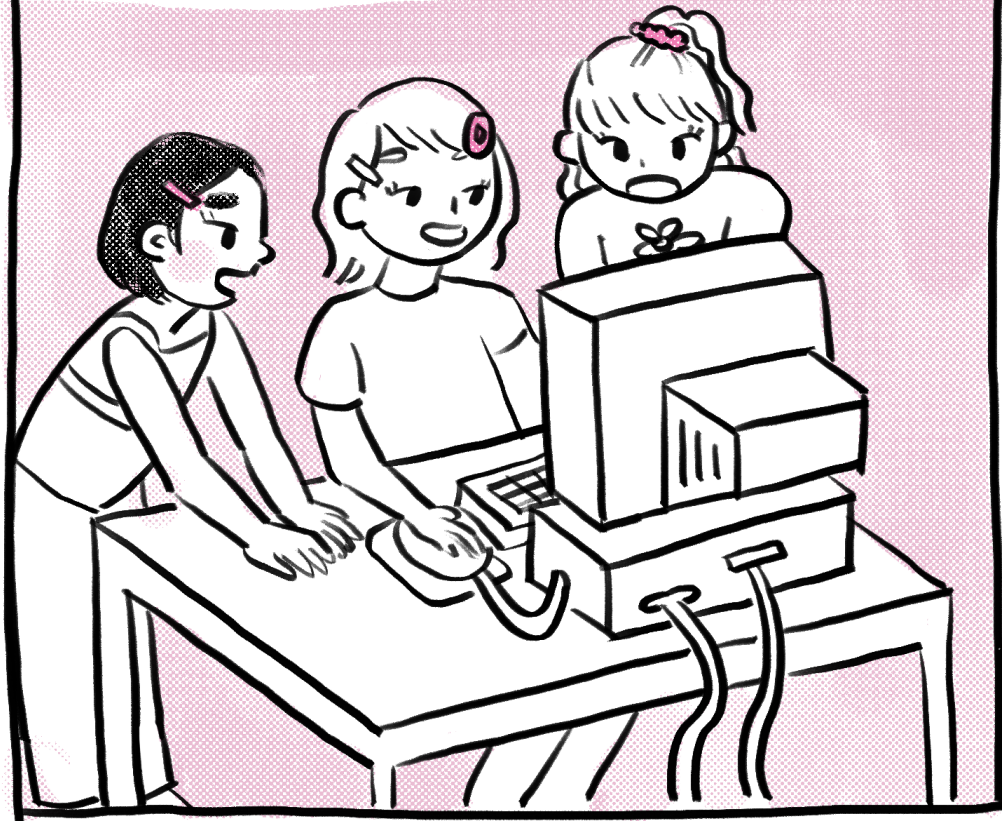


Vanessa-Mae has an electric violin and wears knee high Doc Martens while performing.

She's the only famous Asian person I know of, and I want to be as cool as her.

My friends aren't impressed.

A friend interrupts the music chat to show us paint shop pro and geocities on her family's computer.



She shows us how to make text:

on fire

(will cycle through multiple text styles)

She shows us websites:

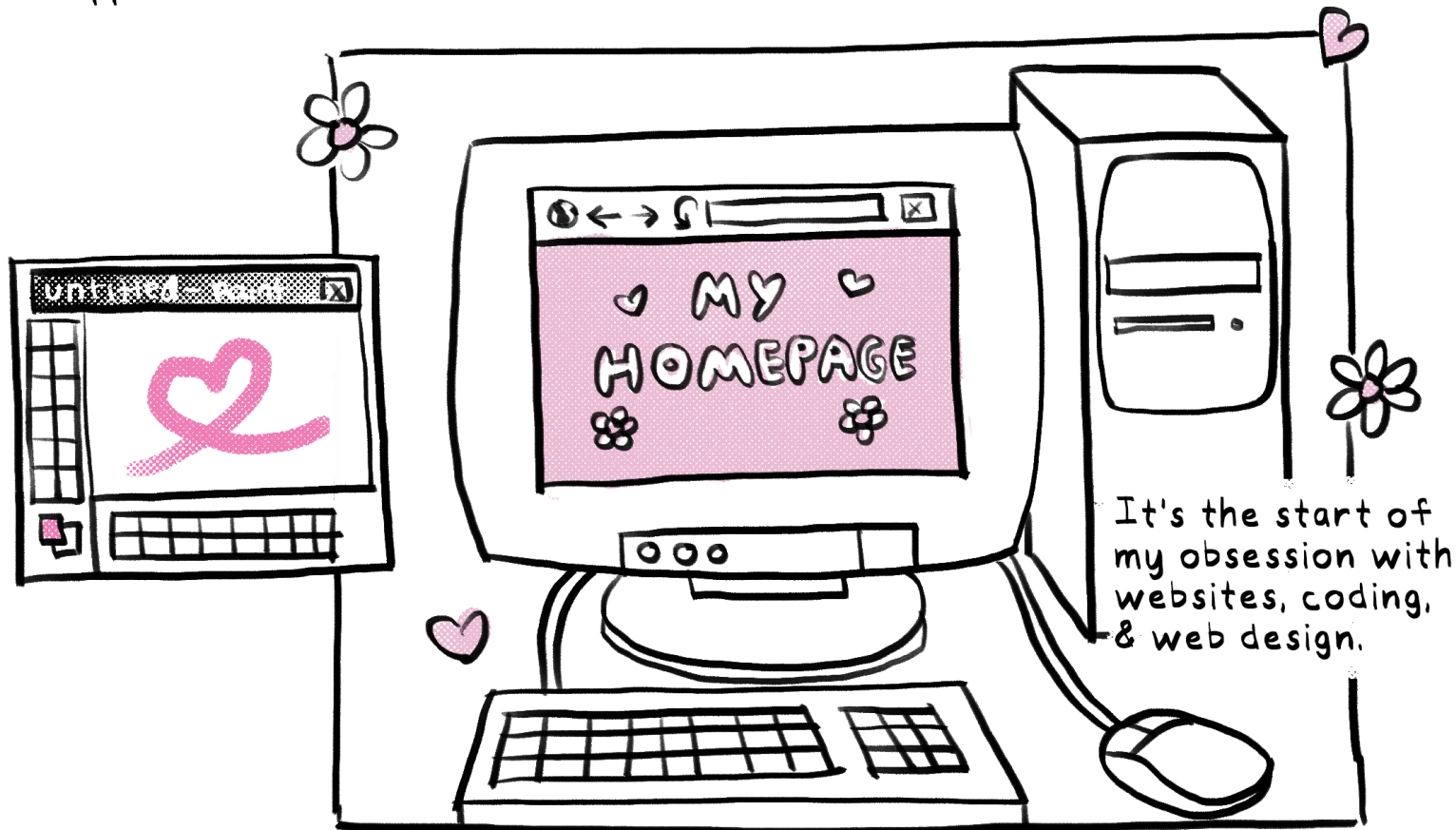


with sparkly backgrounds.
with dress up dolls.
that are boyband tributes.

(will cycle through multiple website styles)

And that's when it happens:

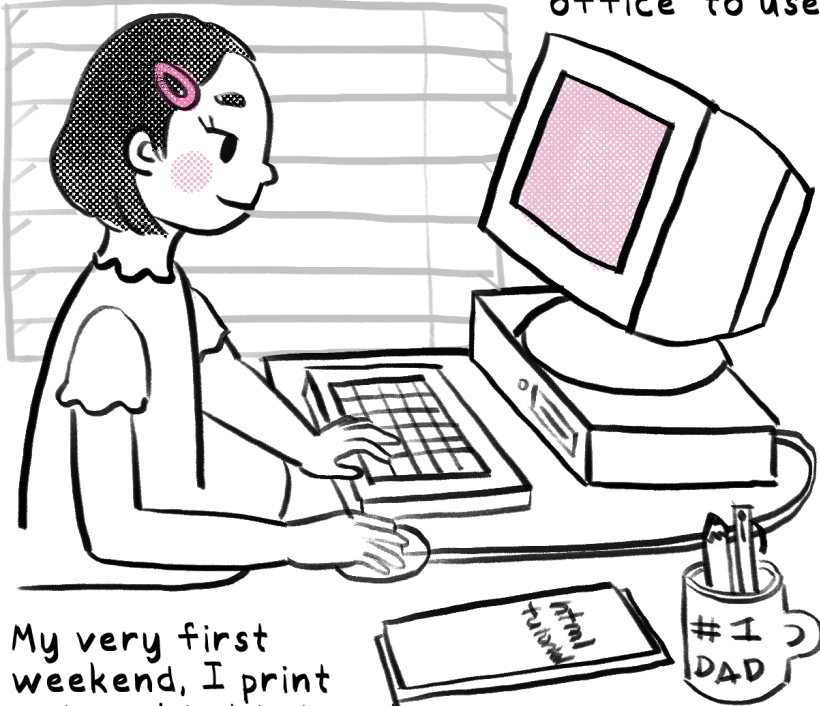
(No, not my period.
That started last year.)



It's the start of
my obsession with
websites, coding,
& web design.

I desperately want to make a website, but we have no internet at home.

So, every weekend after that, I would go to my dad's office to use the internet.

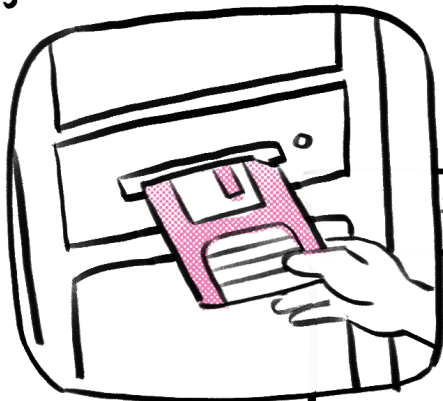


My very first weekend, I print out an html tutorial.

```
index.html [minimize] [maximize] [close]
<html>
  <head>
    <title>My First
      Website
    </title>
  </head>
```

Once I'm home, I code up a website. I type it up from scratch in Notepad, so I can control every detail.

By the next weekend, I'm uploading my first website at my dad's office via a floppy disk.



Even though I had been so eager to make a website, I had no idea what to make it about, except about myself.

(Of course, I leave off info like my name, that I'm 11 years old, live in Mississippi, & am Indonesian American.)

But I'm boring, so I'm worried my website is boring.

I want my website to be interesting and useful, but how?



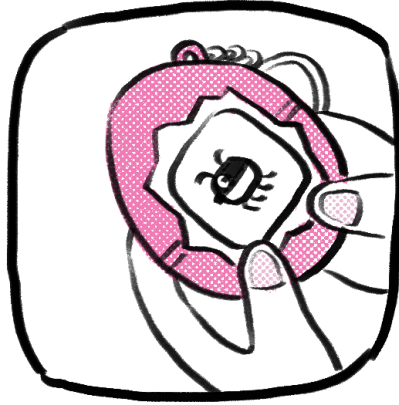
(website will scroll)

I turn 12, and a friend gives me a tamagotchi as a present!



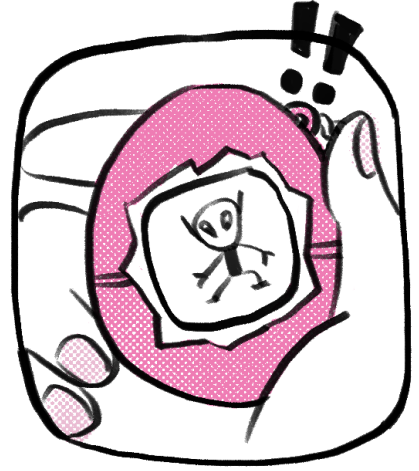
My mom only lets me bring it to school when I show her I can pause it during class.

I raise it and got a weird masked character. I realize I forgot to discipline it.



Maybe that's why it turned out so weird?

Shortly after, it becomes an alien.

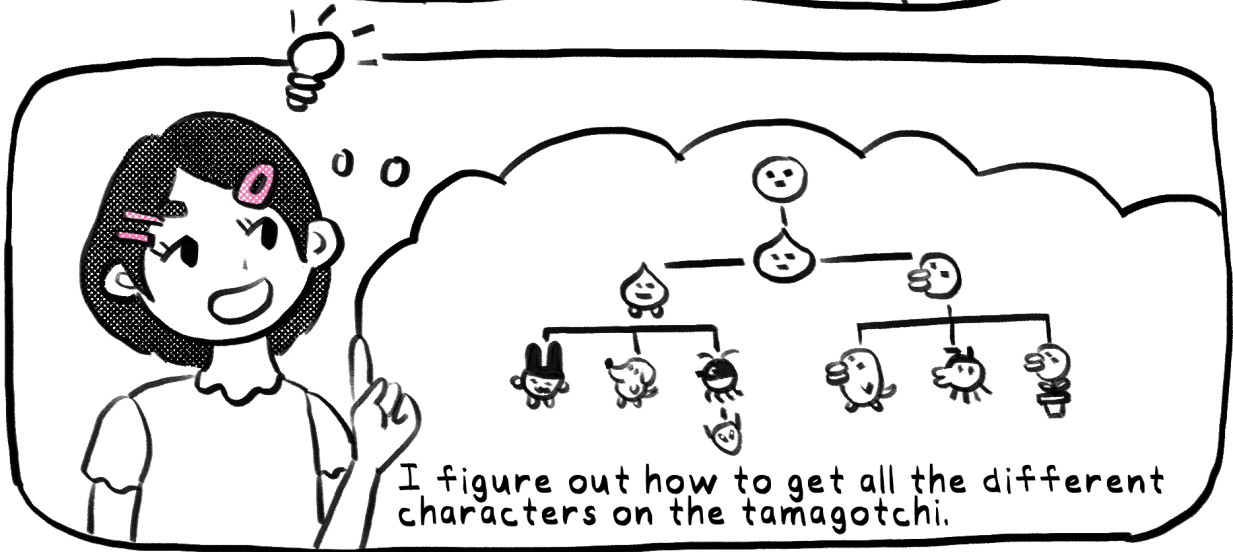


My friend says I unlocked a secret character!

After some
hypothesizing...



and
experimenting

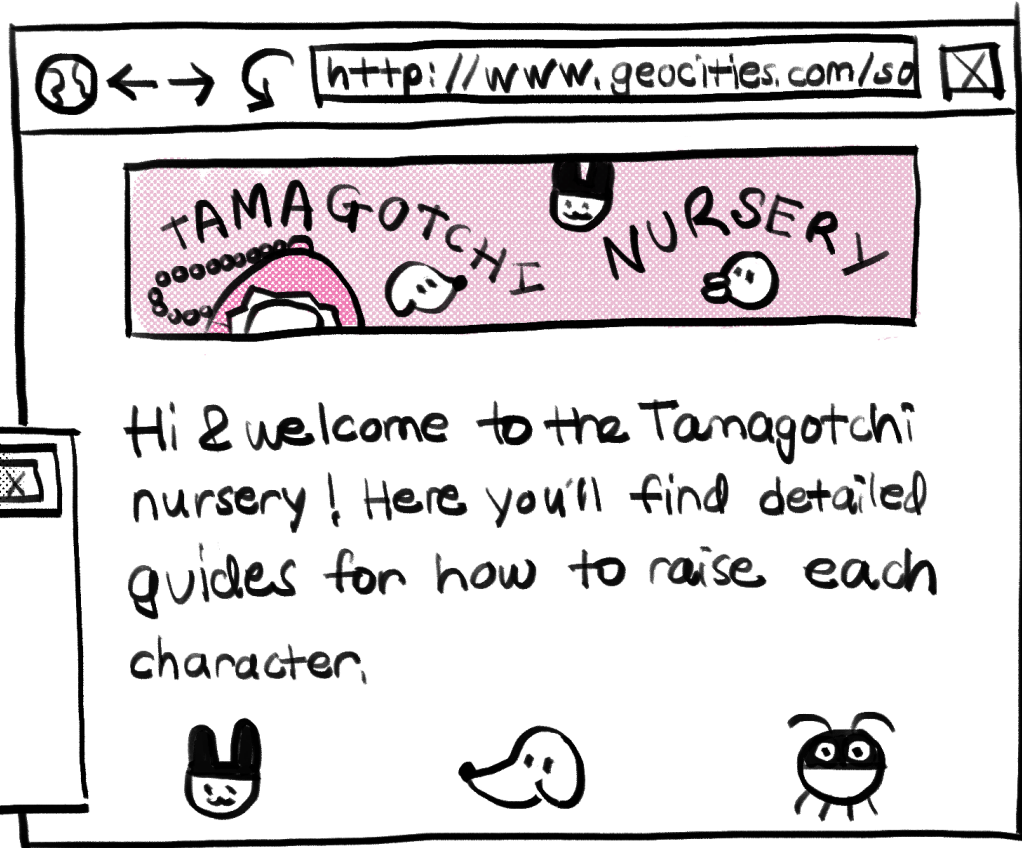
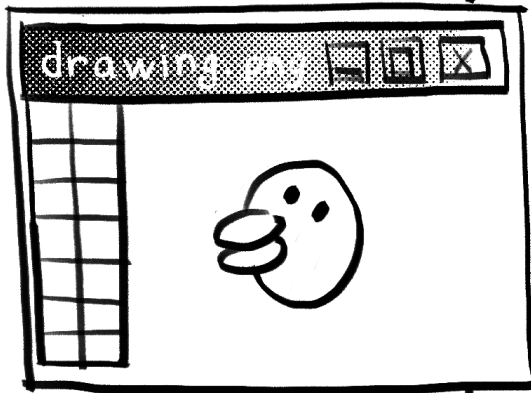


I figure out how to get all the different
characters on the tamagotchi.

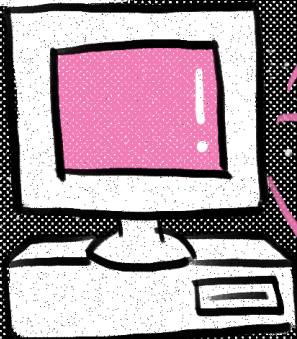
I finally have an idea for a website that can be useful to other people!

I decide to make my website a guide about how to get each type of tamagotchi character.

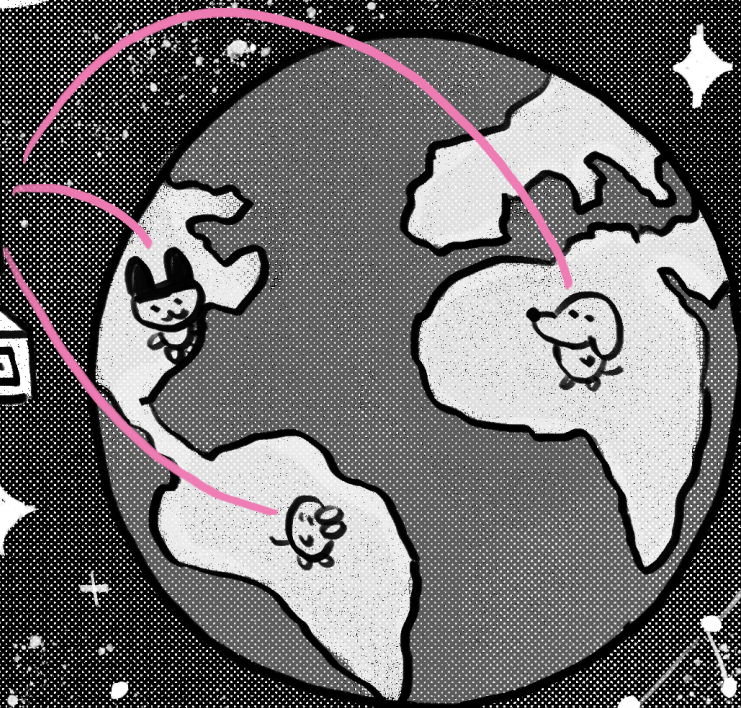
I don't want to steal copyrighted images, so I draw my own graphics.



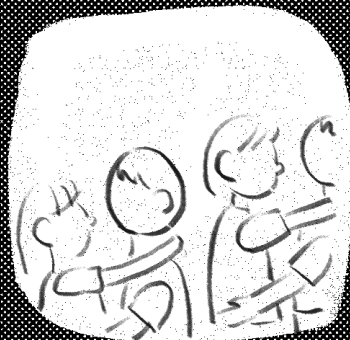
It feels magical to code a website using just Notepad, and watch it become something you can see visually!



```
index.html [ ] [ ] [ X ]  
<img src =  
  "banner.jpg"  
  alt = "tamagotchi">
```



It also feels magical to put it online where everyone can see it, anywhere in the world.



8th grade ends.

My crush is moving out of state, and his friends organize a goodbye dance for him.

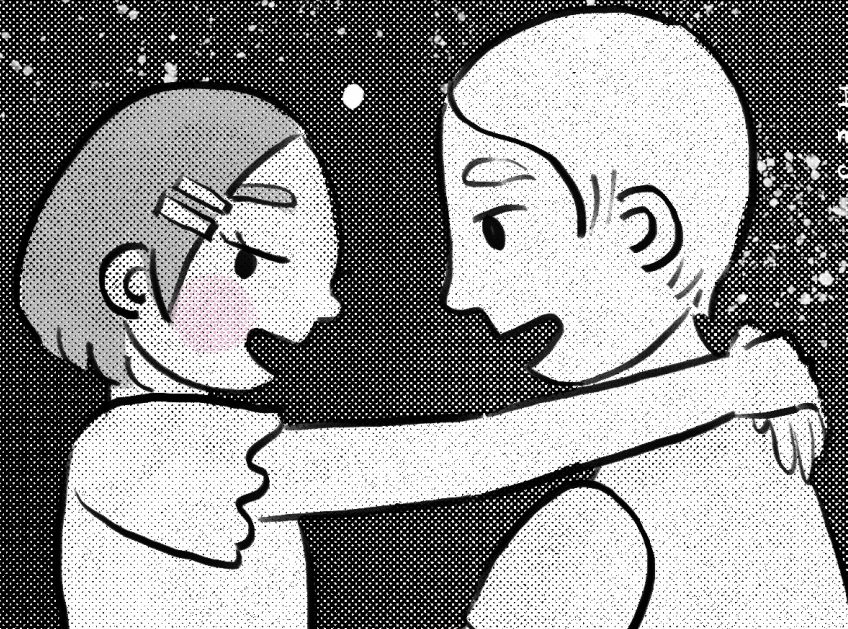


He's really smart but nice about it.

We have the two highest grades in every class we have together, but he's never been competitive or mean towards me.

He asks me to slow dance with him.

But it's his goodbye party, and I think he asked everyone to dance, so it probably doesn't mean anything, right?

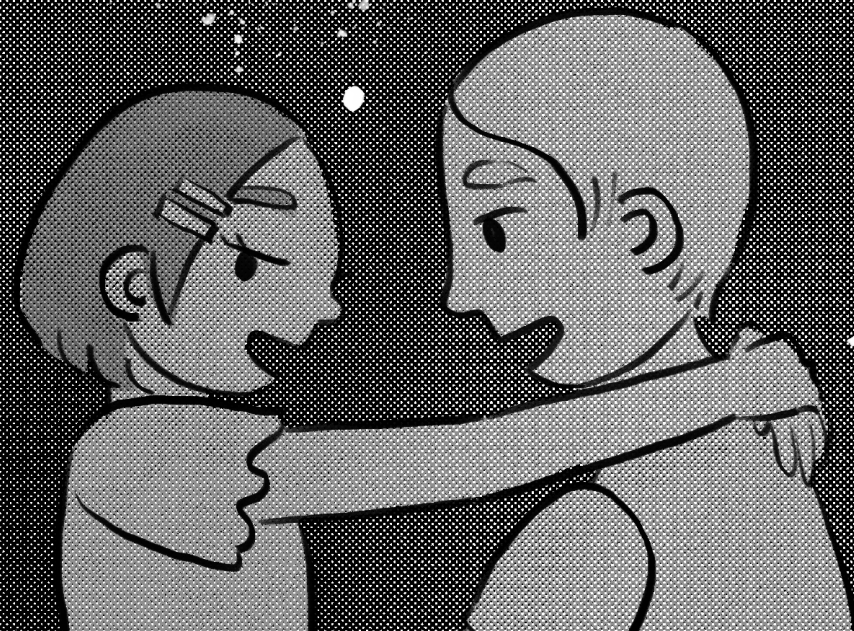


If I had to guess, he likes the most fashionable girl in our class.



I mean, I don't blame him, I kinda have a crush on her too.

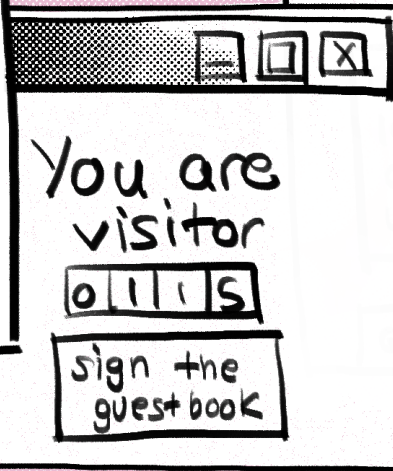
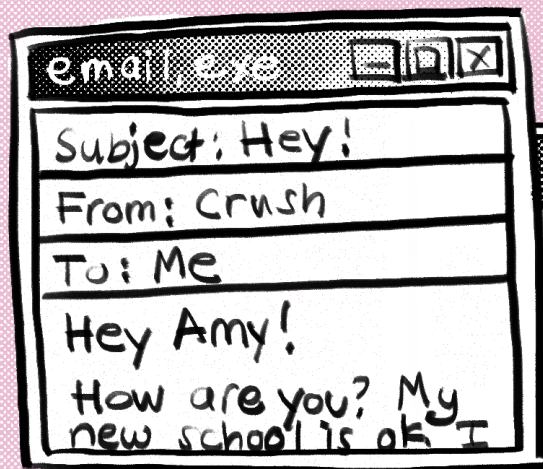
But for those few minutes, as Truly,
Madly, Deeply plays over the speakers,
it's easy to pretend that the world is
just us and that maybe he likes me back.



I'm sad I won't bump into my crush in the hallway anymore,

Wanting more human connection, I install a counter and guestbook on my website.

I eagerly await comments from other tamagotchi fans...



but getting emails from him is another reason to look forward to my weekend internet time.

but all I get is spam.

Middle school is over,
and it's time for high
school now.

The friend who intro-
duced me to websites
switched schools and
we lost touch.

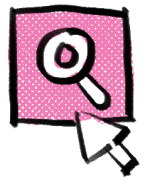
Everyone is so
fashionable while
I'm wearing
thrifed clothes.

I feel so out of
place.



People get up when I sit
down at the table for
lunch so I eat quickly
and spend the rest of
lunch at the library.

what is sailor moon?

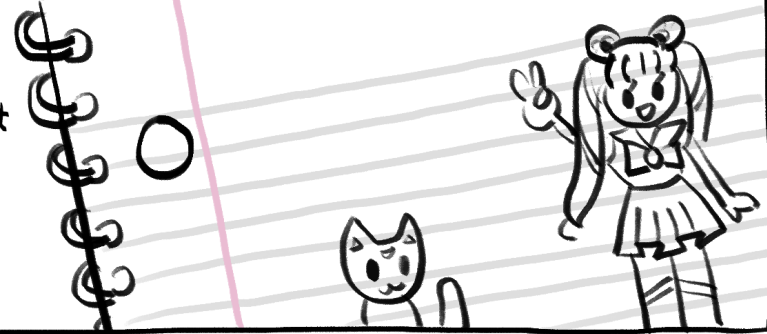


One bright spot in my life is a package from relatives in Indonesia. It includes a Sailor Moon hair clip because my cousins like the show.

I have no idea what Sailor Moon is, but that's easily fixable on an internet weekend.



As soon as I read about Sailor Moon, I become obsessed too and start drawing anime faces everywhere.



There's a character I draw the most:
Sailor Mercury, one of Sailor Moon's
friends & teammates.

Name: Amy

(I was Ami
before I moved
to the US and my
parents Angli-
cized my name)

Loves: Computers

Gets made fun of
at school

Star sign: Virgo

Height: 5'2"



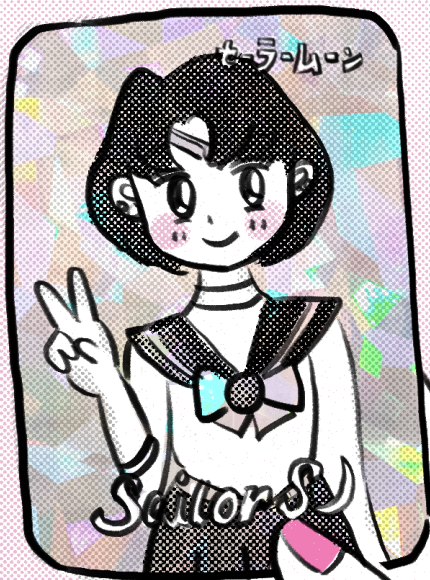
Name: Ami

Loves: Computers

A loner at school

Star sign: Virgo

Height: 5'2"



I've felt like a monster ever since my class
voted me class cutest as a joke.

But an anime character exactly like me makes
me feel less alone.

The internet helped me find myself, literally.

Fueled by my new interests, I plan a complete redesign of my website.

It's a virtual cafe, a space I wish existed in real life.



star fruit cafe

I have so many interests that sometimes I feel scattered.

But, I can have a website for each interest and put links to each site in my cafe's menu.

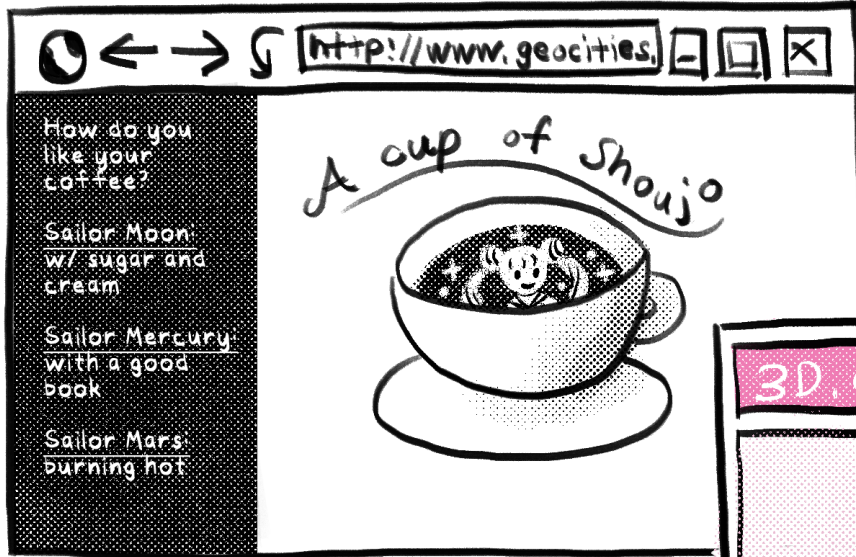
Tamagotchi Ice Cream, . . . 5.1k
the scoop on digital pets

A cup of Shoujo* 6.2k
the hottest news about sailor Moon

*Shoujo = Japanese comics for girls

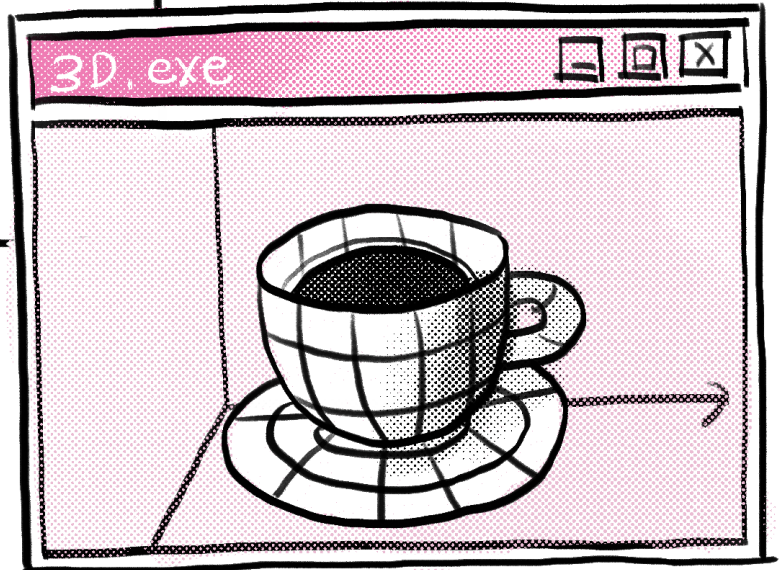
(website will scroll)

(years ahead of trends with my 3D modeled Sailor Moon latte art)



The new website is also a chance to explore new artistic styles.

I learn 3D to make my website look different from others I've seen.

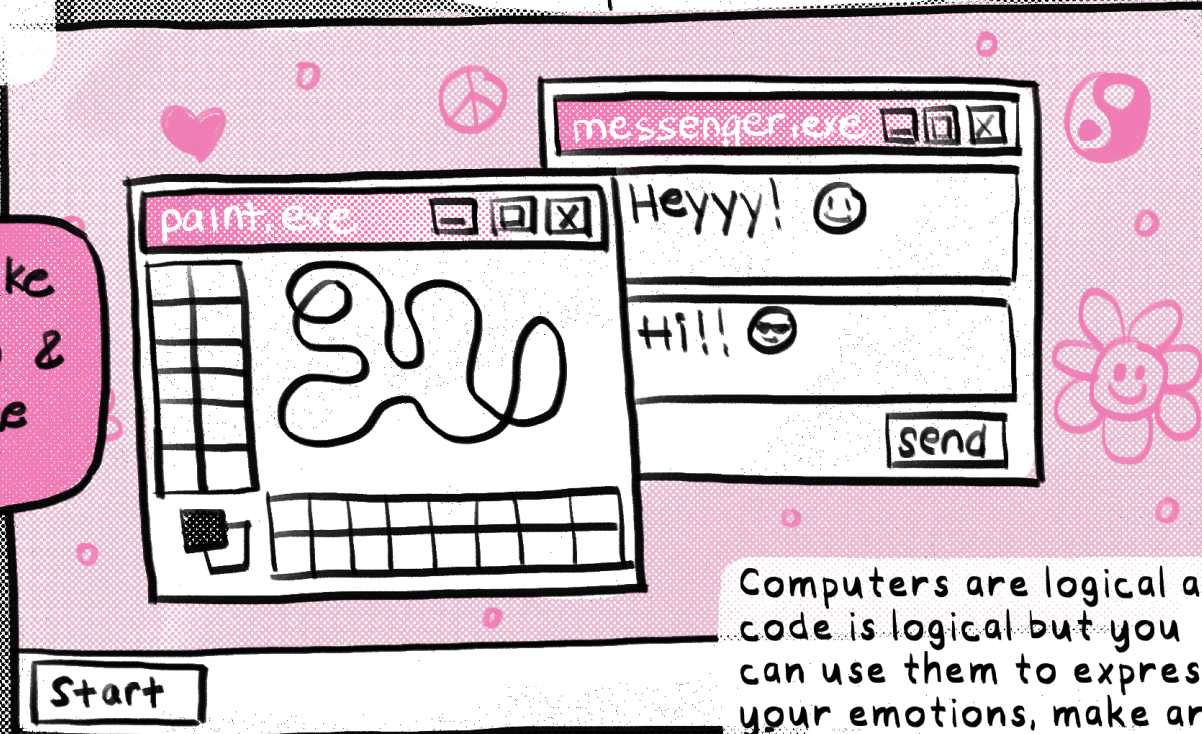


The new website is a chance to learn some more advanced HTML, like `<frames>` to make a navigation side bar.

I dream of one day making friends that like the same things as me.

Omg, you like Sailor Moon & Vanessa-Mae too?

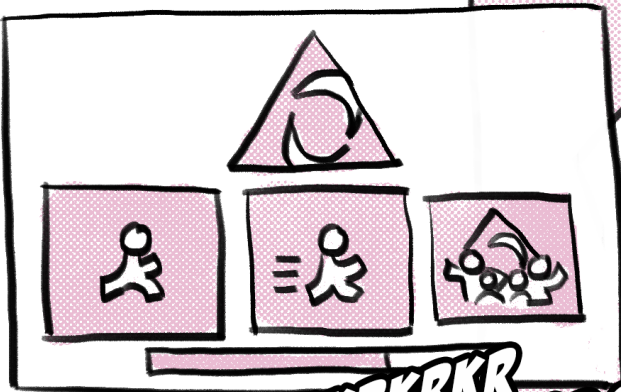
But in the meantime, working on my website combines my love for words, art, and technology, and it's a form of self-expression for me.



Computers are logical and code is logical but you can use them to express your emotions, make art, and communicate to other people.

Sophomore year, we update our computer and finally get internet at home!

AMY ARE YOU ON THE INTERNET AGAIN? PLEASE GET OFF SO I CAN MAKE A CALL



**EEEEEEEE KKKKKRKR
DINGDONG DINGDONG**

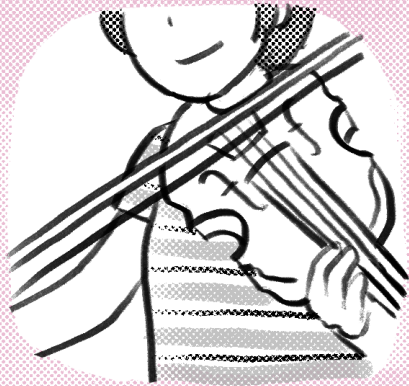
I'm excited to be able to spend all of my time working on my website, but it doesn't turn out like I hoped...



I try to make the rest of high school pass by as fast as possible. It's a blur of...



playing with my little brother



practicing the violin



books read in the library



heartbreak



standardized tests



updating my website

Senior year, I'm applying to colleges, including my dream school.



My new crush questions what I'm doing.



I'm hurt, but he's most likely right.



I'm just a girl from a small school in a small town in Mississippi (which by the way is at the time ranked 50th in education.)

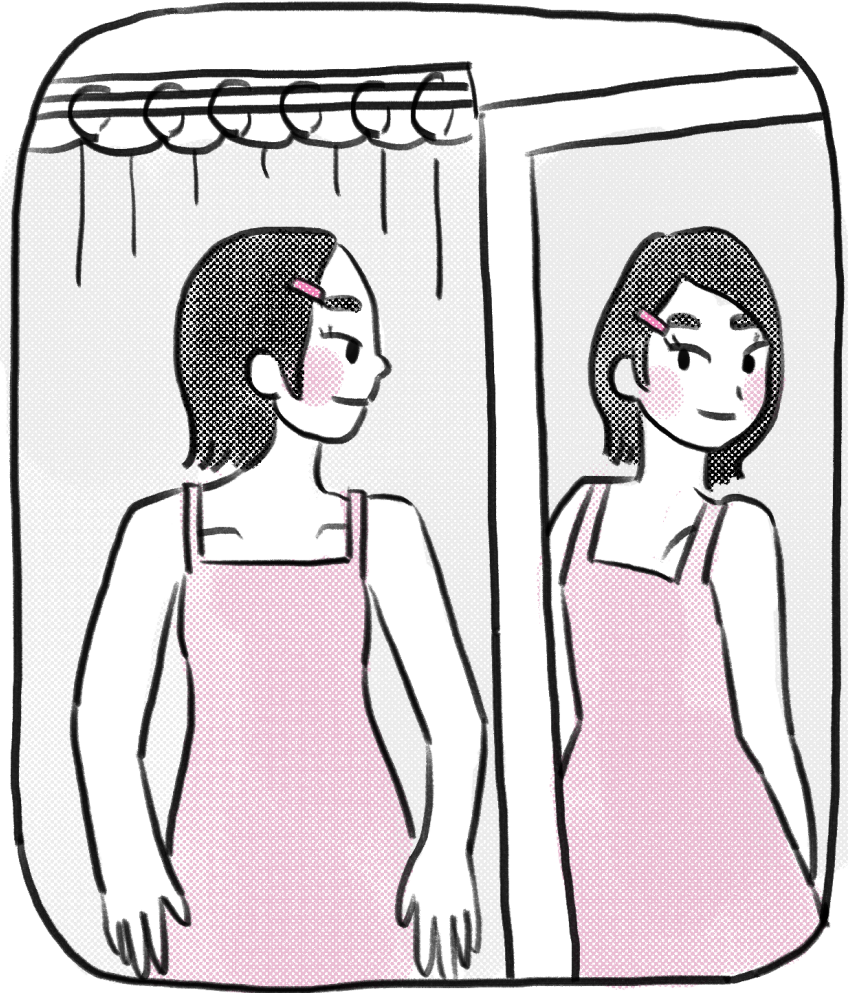
But I apply anyway.

My crush asks me to prom,
kind of.



I go dress shopping.

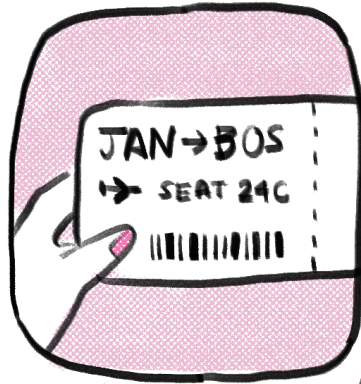
I never thought I'd go to prom
but I guess it won't hurt to
celebrate that high school is over
and that I actually survived it.





A few weeks later, I get a letter of acceptance from my dream school to study Computer Science and Electrical Engineering.

I can't believe it!



I cancel on my prom date because it overlaps with the official campus visitation weekend.



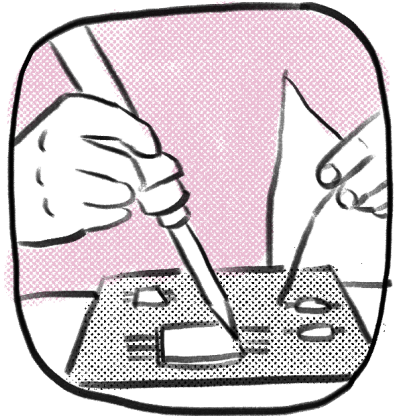
Sorry, I can't go with you after all...



I'm excited for all
the new people I'll
meet,

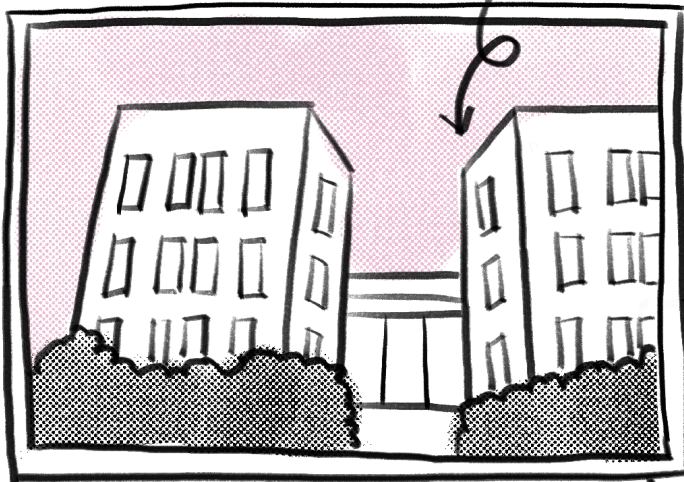


for getting to live in
a new place and see
more of the world,



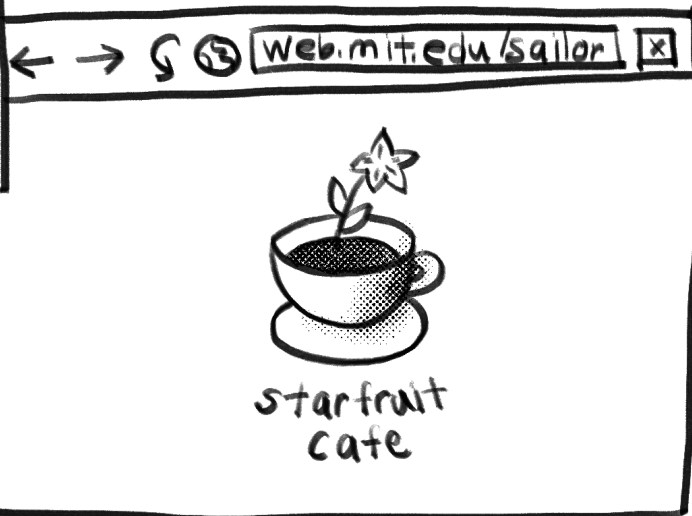
and all the new things
I'll learn about com-
puters.

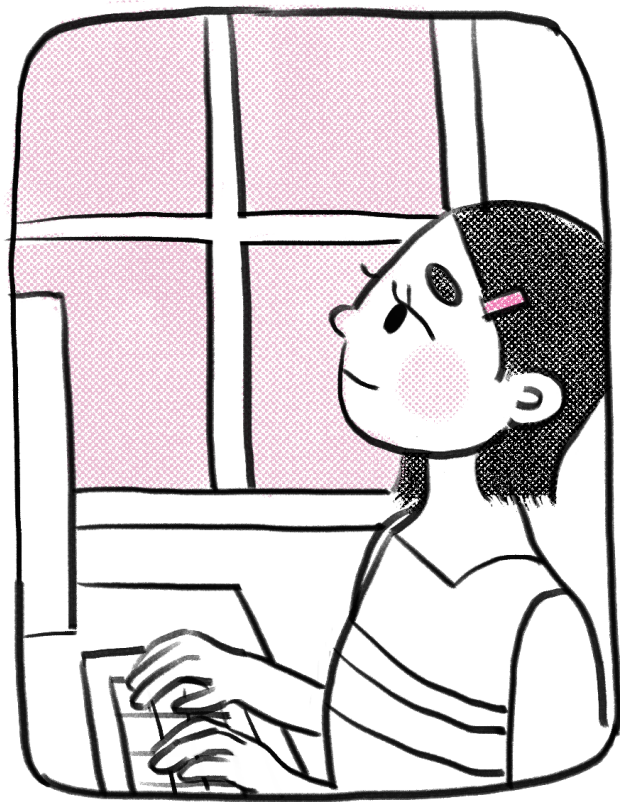
my future
dorm



I'm going to have a new home
soon.

And so will my website.





I'm not sure what the future will bring, but right now it feels like a blank html file: full of possibility.