



PHOTO COURTESY OF EMILY MAMRAK

Emily Mamrak is a third year at Grinnell College, double majoring in Chemistry and Studio Art. When not working for Rootstalk or studying, she can be found building sets for the Theatre Department, watching the clouds, dancing with her friends, or reading in a comfy chair.

Editor's Note

EMILY MAMRAK

I've always felt that cities were too crowded. They have too much cement, too many cars and horns and sirens. They're never truly dark. During my first week here in Iowa, I attended a bonfire out in the prairie. It felt so calm, so quiet. Beyond the welcoming glow of the campfire, I was surrounded by proper darkness, full of rustling prairie grasses, crickets, and, beyond the smaller noises, silence.

And then I looked up.

In the city, no one looks up anymore. You don't miss much, maybe three to five stars if you're lucky. Here it was different. I had never seen so many stars in my life. I could even see the Milky Way stretching itself across the sky. It's hard to truly grasp how large the sky is. What you see is nothing, an insignificant fraction of a whole that could quite possibly go on forever.

I will keep the memory of that night's sky in the prairie with me for the rest of my life. It felt impossibly large, and in turn I felt impossibly small. It also felt like it was welcoming me home, to this place where I was meant to be. As I made friends and ate s'mores around the fire, the sky twinkled up above, much more breathtaking than the glow-in-the-dark stickers on my bedroom ceiling. Whenever I walk places at night now, I always look up.

The stars will never cease to impress me. 🌿



PHOTOGRAPH BY JUSTIN HAYWORTH