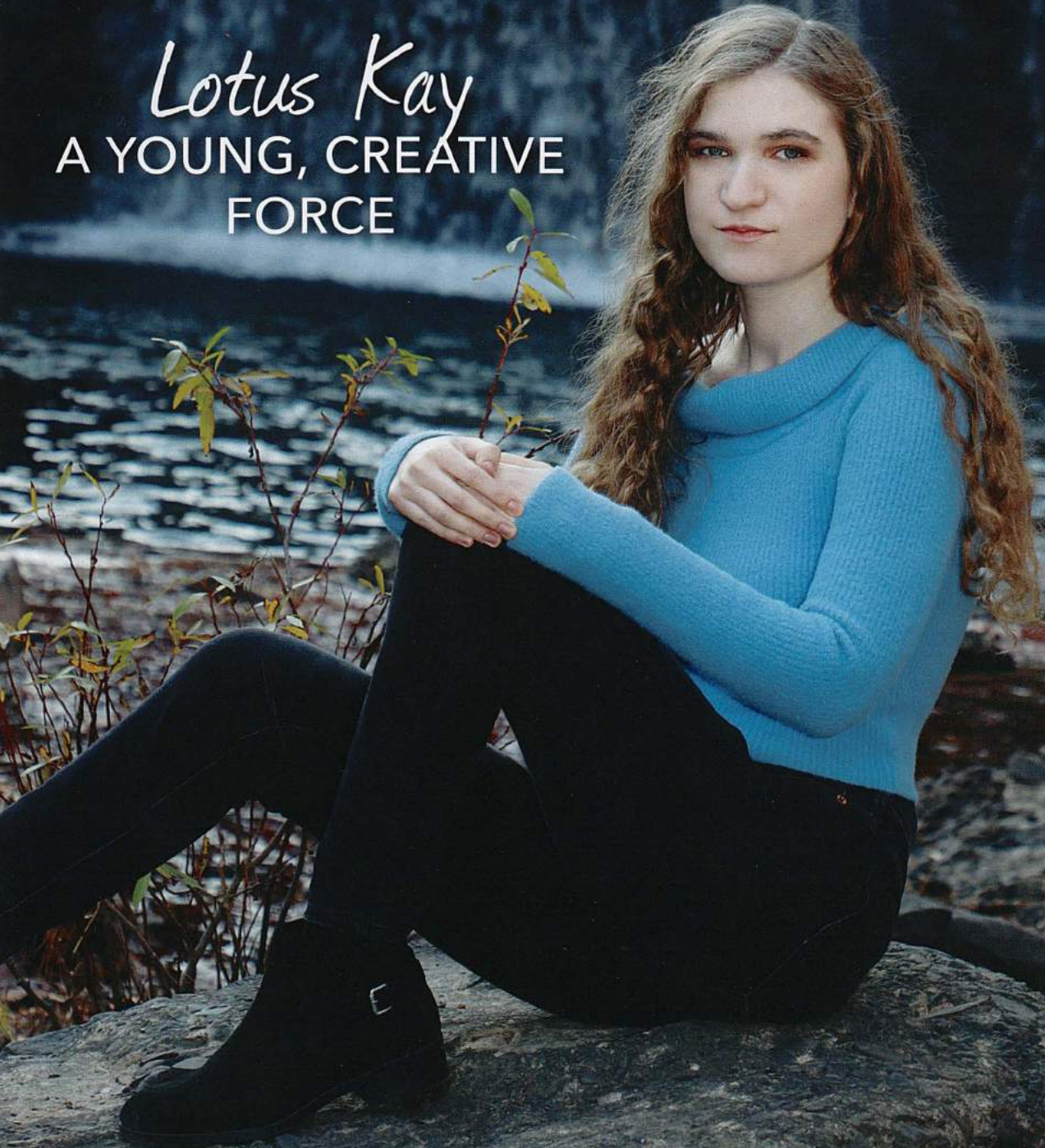


# LIVING Kingston

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*Lotus Kay*  
A YOUNG, CREATIVE  
FORCE



COVER BY MAUREEN GATES

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# Lotus Kay A YOUNG, CREATIVE FORCE

BY VINCENT NUGENT



Photo by Maureen Gates SharplimagesPhotographic.com



Author, singer, actress, Lotus Kay is a prolific artist in varied fields --- an accomplishment for anyone, let alone a 22-year-old. Born in Manhattan, Lotus and her family moved to Woodstock when she was 6 months old, just two months after 9/11. "I love that the area is known as a place for artists and music, as well as standing for peace and spirituality," she said. "I love living in a place where the seasons change so beautifully --- the Catskills is one of the most beautiful places to be." Lotus elaborated, reflecting her reverence for the natural world, "I love apple and pumpkin picking, being in the snow, having fires and smores, spring flowers, water holes and waterfalls. When I come here, I know I'm home."

Although Lotus has been writing poems, stories, and songs since she was a child, she cites a watershed moment, a point when she really considered herself a writer. At age 15, celebrating her first year being vegan, Lotus wrote a long Facebook post in which she reflected upon her dietary choice, the burgeoning political activism of her generation, and the injustice of animal farming. Unbeknownst to her, her father had sent the post to *Vegan Health and Fitness* magazine, which turned her reflections into an article.

Within a year, Lotus had published her first children's book, *More Beautiful Than Heaven*, a work intended to inspire young readers to celebrate the beauty of our planet and to raise awareness of endangered animals and the environment. The book is the first in her collection of five children's books within a project called Bears for Cares. Launched by Lotus and her sister, Jazmin, on Endangered Species Day (third Friday in May), the project is "aimed at educating kids about the state of wildlife, the planet, and promoting kindness towards the Earth and all living things."

In *Billie the Octopus* Lotus hopes "to educate children about the importance of the ocean and protecting fish and marine life." By exploring mankind's evolution, the title character in *Jenny the Chimpanzee* shows "how interconnected humans are with all other wildlife on this planet." Readers get the perspective of "Turkey Day" through the eyes of Milo, a turkey, in *A Thanksgiving for the Turkeys*. Lotus's latest work, *Friends Lift You Up*, addresses "what it means to be a good friend [and] how to prevent bullying." *Friends Lift You Up* and *Jenny the Chimpanzee* received the Mom's Gold Choice Award, and Lotus received a personal letter from Dr. Jane Goodall, who said she thought it was "fantastic" that Lotus was writing children's books about these topics. Each book can be ordered with a companion stuffed animal based on the books' main characters, all of which can be found at [BearsforCares.com](http://BearsforCares.com)

Consistent with her personal mission, Lotus has supported and worked with groups like Mission Blue, a global network supporting marine protected areas; World Wildlife Fund; People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA); and several animal sanctuaries, including our local Catskill Animal Sanctuary. In addition, Bears for Cares was originally created as a campaign that is part of The Jane Goodall Institute Roots & Shoots initiative, whose mission is "to empower young people to affect positive change in their communities." A portion of sales from all the books and toys is donated to the Roots & Shoots program.

But Lotus has not limited herself to writing children's books; her poems and articles have appeared in various print publications and online platforms including *Thrive Global*, *Ellipsis*, *Natural Parent Magazine*, *Kindness Magazine*, *Light of Consciousness*, and *American Vegan*.

Lotus comes from a very close family --- mom, dad, sister. "We're all best friends," she admits. "That sounds cheesy, but it's true." Lotus credits her father with fostering her inquisitive nature, teaching her never to stop asking questions. "My dad always wants me to Google search everything and asks questions about everything. It will be dinner and we are eating this fruit, and he'll ask, 'Where do they grow this fruit? Lotus, do you have your phone near you?' Being in my family, I know too many fun facts ... but it becomes stuff I put in my books to teach kids --- a lot of basic questions people don't ask or even know as adults."

Lotus's talent with the written word is evident in her musical projects as well. "I am a singer / songwriter,



recorded my first album when I was 18, and have been putting out music and videos ever since.” In a review of her debut album, *Feelings on Display*, Buzz Music raved about the six-track project. “Listeners are able to introduce themselves to Lotus Kay’s unique sound as she quite literally puts her feelings on display for the world to hear and experience. We’re impressed with the authentic feel of this album, as it’s truly like nothing you’ve ever heard before.”

Although she does not play an instrument in a traditional sense, Lotus wrote the lyrics and



Photo by Chase Pierson

created the melodies for the songs. She worked with a musician and mentor in producing her first album, as well as on her latest music, which she describes as Pop but with some elements of other genres. In an interview with Buzz Music about her first album, Lotus explained, “You can hear some R & B elements since I like to keep everything within the rhythm, as well as classic singer-songwriter elements. Even a bit alternative indie ... it’s not trying to be any particular set genre.”

With songs she wrote back when she was 13 years old, *Feelings on Display* was a truly personal project, as she reflected in an interview after the album came out. “It was what I needed to write to get through the times I was going through, needing to build my own confidence. I had a lot of fear, but once it was out, it suddenly became a lot easier to start sharing now that I’ve done it.” The album has two companion videos on YouTube along with three additional music videos from her more recent singles. Clearly this young artist has been getting noticed: the videos on the Lotus Kay YouTube channel have generated nearly half a million views. “It’s such a cool thing to have a vision and watch it come to life and get to star in my own musical projects.” Her latest song, “Open Up My Eyes (Remix),” also recently lit up the runway at L.A. Fashion Week.

Lotus enjoys acting as another way to express herself. She started acting and dancing as a child in plays and musicals, taking lessons after



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school and attending performing arts camps in the summer. “I continue to act and perform when I can, and I have become a member of the Screen Actors Guild. More recently I was background in the *Pretty Little Liars* reboot that they were shooting here in the Hudson Valley.”

When she is not writing stories or lyrics, Lotus enjoys listening to different kinds of music or creating TikTok videos. She doesn’t see a separation between her hobbies and work; her pastimes meld into her creative projects. “I also love fashion design and sketching and designing clothes.” You can see one of her

creations, a purple dress, in the music video for her song “Open Up My Eyes.”

Lotus explained the importance of sound and activity in her life. “I don’t relax easily, which I have learned is true for many people who, like me, are autistic. Music and moving help.” She elaborated on the difficulty of neurodivergent people to relax. “Some of our minds don’t turn off; we are hyperactive as well as sensations in our body are felt more strongly and every sense we perceive around us --- living in the world is just plainly more stressful.”

Lately Lotus has been exploring the myriad health and wellness benefits of sound bowls. “I wonder about the healing qualities of music ... what music can do to move people and heal. I want to push the limits on that.” This healing journey for Lotus has involved learning Reiki, yoga and mantra meditation, and attending sessions with Woodstock-based healer Nidhi Adhiya-Huba, including a retreat to Costa Rica. “As an autistic person I found these practices to be particularly helpful, and she (Nidhi) and I have been discussing creating a retreat in Costa Rica specifically for autistic / neurodivergent people potentially in 2024.”

Lotus and her family have an annual New Year’s Eve tradition, which is centered around a box; it’s an activity that allows them to review and celebrate the past year. Yet, an outsider may be a bit confused if they hear someone in the Kay family say, “Put it in the box.” Lotus explained, “My family writes down good things that happen throughout the year on a sticky note and puts them in a box. And then on the

last day of the year, we open the box and get to read about all the good things that happened that year.” The family keeps all the boxes with the years marked on them.



Photo by Kelly Merchant

A collector of mantras, Lotus is inherently inquisitive, always seeking to glean knowledge from her encounters and experiences. “No matter what I’m going through, I think about ‘What can I learn from this?’ and widening my perspective and philosophy on the human experience --- what it means to be human, to teach me about myself, about others, about life and about love.”

Visit [lotuskay.com](http://lotuskay.com) to learn more about Lotus Kay’s music and publications.

