

In the short story, *Sam the Athlete* we meet a young boy named Sam, who is going into middle school. From the author's description, he seems to be somebody with a friendly face and skinny limbs, overall slight of build. For the majority of the story, he has shaved legs & red running shoes with white wings stitched on them. He is quite nervous about what others think, and is rather obsessed with fitting in, as is evidenced by the fact that he decides to stay on the all-girls field hockey team and wear the uniform skirt because of the coach telling him that he did a good job. While he is portrayed as a nice boy, he doesn't always seem to understand the difference between need & want. This is shown when he says, on page 59, "I need new sneakers for school". It was stated that his old sneakers still fit, so new sneakers would not be classified as a need. Directly after this quote, the story shows how close he is with his mom, as she promptly understands that he wants sneakers that fit in. In the beginning of the story he has low self esteem, but at the end he is a confident person. I'd say it's a change for the better.