

Personal Essay

I remember lying in bed on a cold fall afternoon. The freshman year excitement had ended. Everyone was out doing something fun like going to dances or finding new friends. Everyone except for me. The only times I was allowed out were for homework and maybe a coffee. It was a rough time. I realized I needed to find something to keep me busy and keep my mind off of things. I looked up hobbies online: Cooking, writing, dancing. Nothing seemed to interest me. I remember later that same afternoon I saw a video of a guy playing a super clean guitar riff. That same melody kept repeating in my head the whole night. I thought man I want to be able to play something as sweet as that riff. This short 15 second clip had grabbed my attention by the neck. I went back online but this time with a mission, looking for a guitar and amp on amazon. So the two-week anxious and excited delivery period started. I started watching youtube tutorials for my favorite songs and went and bought some guitar picks to feel legit. I didn't know what the journey ahead held for me.

It finally came. It was probably the biggest package I had ever received. I open the end of the elongated box and pull out a guitar engulfed in every sort of plastic wrap I had ever seen. When I finally got rid of all the wrapping, there it was. The long awaited, beautiful, glossy sunburst amazon guitar. I quickly unboxed the tiny amp I had ordered along with it. I switched the small amp on. The little blue light and the feedback static ringing through indicated I was ready to play. All the tutorials, clips, and tiktoks all added up to this moment. I grabbed my pick, and I struck the cheap strings. Wow. I would've never imagined how terrible it would sound. My fingers started to hurt. I lifted them to notice the indents left behind. I tried again. My fingers hurt more, I couldn't keep them in place. Wrong string. Wait, wrong note. My hands can't stretch that far. Why does it sound like that? I quickly realized I was completely mistaken on what I thought this experience would be. Although I realized this would be a very long learning process, I was not discouraged. I kept going and going until my hands cramped. My hands felt like they had just hit the gym and got a crazy pump. It was all so new, but so fun.

The days and weeks went by and noise that somewhat resembles songs started emitting from the tiny amp. This process went on for months. I was getting better slowly but surely. The songs started making sense, later came solos, and then playing with others. Before I knew it the year had gone by. That year I learned many things. And it wasn't just how to play the guitar. I found a way to express myself creatively. I learned how to make something good out of what could seem like a bad situation at first. And most importantly there's always light at the end of the tunnel, nothing will last forever. Maybe I still wasn't allowed out all that much yet, but I knew I'd be okay.

Personal Essay Reflection:

To begin the brainstorming process, I remember doing the exercise from College Essay Essentials which involved listing objects that make me, me. The guitar was the one I was really drawn to. The book also helped me tie this to a difficulty I have faced which was pretty cool. I explored the feeling of loneliness, this felt meaningful because I feel I've progressed so much as a person and emotionally and I was able to get out of this mental block. I discarded the idea of a career, and I decided my emotional journey was much more vulnerable and interesting. My draft first started off as how much I loved guitar and I honestly deviated from any of the emotion. But I got some feedback and I realized I had to expand a lot more on how I grew from the experience and not just how much I loved guitar. Once I did expand, I realized that I had way too much to say. I wrote so much and realized I had to cut some of the unnecessary filler. I left in only the main parts that were either moments of growth or turning points. I think this was the hardest part of revising, having to go on a mental journey of the past and choose all the key moments. Writing it down was the easy part but just thinking of the most impactful moments took up most of my time revising. The ending product was a bit more emotional than I had ever planned it to be. I'm proud that I was able to be vulnerable as it's not something I like to do. I think my idea was nicely presented to people of my age, I shared maybe some relatable content and then ways I was able to progress. I learned how hard it is to write about yourself and not just answer a prompt. But I was able to remind myself of how life can shape you and how everything will come to an end.