

Response to Prompt #3:

Music is an impressive and intricate way to evoke feeling through a combination of sounds. It's a powerful thing. The versatile art comes in numerous genres, with the ever-present opportunity to create more. The infinite potential of music never ceases to amaze me, and perhaps that is part of what drew me to it in the first place.

I dare say my affinity with the arts comes from my father, an impressive singer himself. He told me how I'd wriggle with joy whenever he sang to me as a baby. It was really no surprise, then, that I joined choir in the third grade. Along with singing, I enjoyed toying with the instruments whenever I could, which is how I eventually taught myself piano. And once I got headphones, that *really* changed things. I wore them all the time, drinking up new sounds. Then I used them to enhance my daily life. Walking on its own was fine, but striding to something powerful felt amazing. Folding laundry was dull, but sorting things out to relaxed lo-fi or uplifting math rock was an experience. Even now it's not quite the same, going through tasks without a bit of accompaniment.

Being a headphone-head didn't necessarily make me more withdrawn--quite the opposite, actually. In middle school, I was a rather shy singer and a lonesome person, but in high school I came out of my shell, thanks to the Texas Music Educators Association All-State Track. I participated for three years. While I never made it to State Choir, I did carry home the best prizes: increased musicality, a more open and sociable personality, a community I had bonded well with, and the knowledge that I would have done it all over again if I could. Many students from various backgrounds shared a common goal, and at one point or another we all had our headphones in, trying to study and master our assigned sounds. When it came to performing said pieces, I couldn't get over the immeasurable pride, the confidence, the sense of being *alive* that accompanied vocal performance, and to this day I'm always eager to flaunt my voice for any willing audience.

With all that I've experienced, I look towards the future and see something unpredictable, and to an extent intimidating. But music is formulaic and stable. I'll have to do things on my own, but I don't think it'll be too bad as long as I have my songs and my voice. For the first time, I'll be living hundreds of miles away from home. So what? I'll have my passion, my confidence, and my strength. And of course, I'll be packing my headphones.