

Student's Name

Professor's Name

Course Name/Code

Date

Autobiography of a Young Musician

My name is Noah Green, and I am twelve years old. I live in Nashville, Tennessee, with my parents and my older sister, Lily, who does not play any instruments but says she is my biggest fan, which I think is mostly true.

I started playing guitar when I was seven. It was my grandpa's idea. He played for most of his life — folk music, mostly, and some country — and when I turned seven he sat me down on his porch one afternoon, put his old acoustic guitar in my lap, and showed me how to hold a G chord. My fingers were too small to press all the strings down properly and it sounded terrible. He told me that was fine, that everyone's first chord sounds terrible, and that the only way through it was to keep pressing until your fingers learned where to go. I practiced that one chord every day for two weeks until it stopped buzzing. That was how I learned everything about learning guitar, and probably about most other things too.

My grandpa taught me my first full song — Horse With No Name by America, which has exactly two chords and is a good first song for that reason. By the time I was eight I could play it without looking at my hands. By nine I had moved on to songs with more chords and had started learning from videos online as well as from my grandpa. By ten I had my own guitar, a second-hand Fender that my parents found at a music shop and had restrung and set up before giving it to me. I named it. I will not say what I named it because my sister already makes fun of me enough about it.

Last year, three of my friends and I formed a band. We practice in my friend Caleb's garage on Saturday afternoons. I play lead guitar. Caleb plays bass. Our friend Priya plays

keyboard and sings, and Marcus plays drums on a kit his older brother left behind when he went to college. We have played two shows — one at school and one at a neighbourhood block party — and both times I was so nervous beforehand that I could not eat, and both times once we started playing I forgot to be nervous. I think that is what people mean when they say something feels right.

My favourite music is rock — classic rock mostly, the kind my grandpa introduced me to. Led Zeppelin, The Who, Jimi Hendrix. I also listen to a lot of pop and jazz, which Priya got me into. Jazz guitar especially is something I am just starting to explore, and it is much harder than rock in ways I find interesting rather than discouraging.

I practice for at least forty-five minutes every day. Some days it is because I am working on something specific. Other days it is just because I want to. I hope to become a musician when I grow up — not necessarily famous, though that would be fine — but someone who plays music seriously, writes their own songs, and makes a living doing something they chose rather than something they settled for. My grandpa says that is a good goal. He also says the work is the point, not the outcome. I am twelve, so I am still figuring out what that means. But I think about it a lot.

