

Prompt: Give me an example of a time when you were under pressure / Tell us about your greatest accomplishment (Bethel University). (No word count, but I kept it around 500-700 words)

Personal Statement

I think one of the biggest pressures I faced so far in life is simultaneously my greatest accomplishment. After playing guitar for five years and playing drums for about four years, I sought out to self write my own album. Little did I know that it wasn't just writing but also endless recording and producing, alongside the distribution and promotion processes. Originally starting the project back in January 2024, I ended up accidentally writing a concept album over my spring semester of my Junior year of college. When I returned home for summer, I was apprehensive about losing possible recording time, however I'd spent every other summer working as much as possible to save up some cash. I knew just being in town would end in overtime and no energy to spend on the album, so I had to devise a plan to combat these likely pitfalls. I scheduled studio time at Silver City Studios in Milwaukee, scheduled for the very end of summer, aiming that I could save up the needed cash and still have sufficient time to write something worthwhile.

Then the date finally arrived, Tuesday, August 13. Ironically enough, my car ended up giving out days before, leading me to hitch a ride to downtown Milwaukee the crack of dawn. I ended up arriving before the owners did! I'm not typically a morning person, but I woke up so determined that there was no room to even consider any other possibilities. I only had the studio, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., leaving six hours to set up mics, drum to an entire album sufficiently and then do multiple vocal takes for each song. For an eleven song album that's a big ask, however, I ended up leaving with 20 minutes to spare! And honestly? The hardest part wasn't even the performances, it was not being able to listen back to every take. There was the obvious pressure of the clock ticking, but there was also additional pressure from the idea that what I paid for is what I get; the quality of my album is entirely dependent on these performances. With a year of producing that was about to follow, I knew if I butchered a take I'd have to sit and hear it endlessly.

In retrospect, the studio experience taught me the value of when to trust yourself. Although humans are flawed, it's also part of why art is so fixated on imperfections. The time in the studio really certified the idea of what I like to call "perfect-imperfections". It's the little things you'd pick up in songs, like Sting sitting on a piano on "Roxanne" or Kurt Cobain jumping in early on "Polly". It's the artist's imperfections that the audiences see as perfect. Working on my album for a year and a half, I labored over every detail I could control, but once I distanced myself from that need to control everything that I found the music breathing, not being squashed by the weight of my dreams. Similar to most friendships, music making is built on compromise, but one needs to pick and choose when to do so. With my debut album, "Remnants of a Thief", I knew I had to attain a sort of maximalist minimalism to truly portray its themes. The album follows a protagonist who feels their idealized self has been stolen, but with every attempt to reclaim their idealized perfection, they grow further from it. Its conclusion is the same

conclusion that I drew from the creation process: imperfections are ultimately inevitable, but there is still overwhelming beauty just waiting to be seen.

This year and a half process of serving something greater than myself is my biggest accomplishment this far in life. To be able to have the power to start my legacy at 20 years old is something I still hold reverence for, even now two years later. It's this balance of self discipline, creativity and laying out the foundation for our legacies that drive my interest in Bethel University' Grad School program. Thank you for your time and consideration.