**First Draft**

The stage is set. Spotlights blind me but I take stride in the knowledge that I will be seen. Deafening voices drown out my thoughts in a sea of pressure. But I listen carefully. But I will be heard. Not through my voice, but through my actions. Thunderstruck by the sky overlooking the grand stage, a storm of anxiety loomed. Channeling Van Halen. Bravely raising my pick as high as I dramatically could. Holding my final breath. I let it go. I strike. And as electrifying currents run through my hand to viciously strike down on my strings, I felt it. the noise of the audience… **erupted.** The moment of truth, what all those hours of practice had been for. It was then. Time stopped. The world seemed to come around to a halt. My head, in contrast, was spinning endlessly. The noise of the audience, like the noise of my guitar, and my heart. Died. Brutally murdered by the hands of a technical error. The flow of charges along with it. The noise of my guitar. Died.   
  
For the next few days, I was stripped of my confidence. That bravado lost. People felt alien. X-marks on every face I walk by at school forced me to stare down at my feet in shame. My bandmates, I couldn’t confront them. Ironic for a frontman. At home, corroded nickel plating mixed with sweat and rust gave the strings an awfully pungent odor. Bitter nostalgia. Reminded me of the past, taking time off practicing differential equations to pluck away at my toils. Now, I couldn’t even bear looking at the coils. Nonetheless, find the bravery in me to touch it.  
  
I tore the musical tool down like the voices of the audience tore me down; to pieces. Coils, potentiometers, and capacitors. Funny how that topic I struggled on. I still got the A, but here it was now clear as day. A strange connection deeper than before on the subject. And after, there it laid bare on my bed. Gutted out of the backplate, there it rests, a broken faulty ¼ jack. A broken piece of myself.  
  
But by the end, I was content. I still think about that day every time I fall. It reminds me how falling is not the end of the world. Just like how it was not the end of my dream. I still managed to be the captain of the music society. There I was still burning. But there I realized my passion for music was actually a gateway to my passion for the sciences. And through that gate, there is a greater stage waiting, with an even grander audience. I’m constantly reminded that every failure is a chance at learning something new about a subject, and about myself. Problems always exist, and I have to take initiative in solving them before the worst happens.  
  
I take that newfound spirit and confidence everywhere I go. My burning passion is now fueling my non-profit educational initiative where I’m looked at and listened to by children every week who deserve to have their spotlight in society as I had. The lack of energy, faulty electronics, and heating made me realize that technical problems could be so detrimental to society. Be it social, environmental, or technical. Like my guitar, I am excited to go on to further stages of my life where I am able to fix larger, greater problems and contribute to the audience of the world.

