**Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others. (650 words).**

1:54 - 2:11, a time interval I would never forget. With my guitar in hand, I rewound the song to 1:54 for the thousandth time. It has been months since I first started practicing this song, and I still couldn’t play these 17 seconds. I was getting frustrated. My fingertips were sore from the sliding and indenting on the steel strings. My shoulders ached from the weight of my guitar strapped over it, but I refused to give up.

All my life, I remember always being overshadowed by my peers. At home, I was never the most talented sibling. In school, I was always Nicole’s friend, never just “Shana”. Overtime I felt insecure and overly cautious. I was shy because I thought nobody really wanted to get to know me. It felt like I was townsperson B in somebody else’s story. However, this January, I discovered a song that changed my entire perspective. It was titled Namae wo yobuyo. This was the bridge:

“I was searching for a reason, for myself to be who I am

If there is a “me” that continues to live on within you

Even if it’s through the dark or up a tall hill

I should be able to be someone who can surpass them”

It was screaming at me to mature, to finally close the longest chapter of my life. So, I did.

Now, listening to the song assured me that I can be the main character of my own story. It became one of my sentimental values and mastering it on the guitar became my goal.

Little did I know, mastering it will not just make the song more meaningful but will also spark new realization.

When I showed the song to my teacher, he said he didn’t want to teach it to me because he thinks that I lacked the technical experience needed to play it. I was in disbelief. How could he assume something was impossible without trying it? However, I wasn’t fazed. I didn’t want to let unproven words get in the way of my goal. I was determined to learn the song. So, instead of feeling discouraged by my teacher’s words, I became more determined to learn.

Week 1: Learn and memorize notes and combine them all.

Week 2: Play the song at 1/2 speed — make playing the notes muscle memory, PRACTICE A LOT.

Week 3: Play the song at 3/4 speed — slowly build up speed after successfully playing at 1/2 speed.

I wrote down my weekly goals in my planner.

Week 1: Learned and memorized notes.

Week 2: Can’t play at 1/2 speed.

Week 3: Still can’t play at 1/2 speed.

Without proper guidance, I was lost in the fast tempo and unfamiliar chords. I stumbled over the same notes, plucked the wrong strings. My fingers and shoulders ache from how much I practiced. It discouraged me to know all my efforts had led to this — just a series of jumbled notes and physical pain.

But I continued.

Week 17: Successfully played at full speed.

I smiled.

For 17 weeks, I ignored the feelings of discouragement and kept practicing. I developed a strategy where I recorded myself playing the whole song every Monday and compared myself one week with the week before. They made me notice the mistakes I frequently made and how it affected my playing. From small details such as long nails to something more significant like wrong timing, I’d correct it and see where it takes me. Additionally, to keep my motivation high, I’d watch these videos. Seeing how much I improved in a few weeks made me want to keep going. Despite the obstacle, I was persistent in my practice. Finally, I was able to reach my goal.

As I progressed into learning the song, Namae wo yobuyo started to become something more than just a sentimental value, it made me learn something valuable — it taught me to keep going no matter the challenges.

Before I learned this song, I wasn’t patient with my work. If I were to reach a dead-end in math problems or an anomaly in chemistry practicals, I would easily get frustrated and give up. But now, when I come face-to-face with a challenge and feel doubt creeping back up, I’ll look back on this journey and grit my teeth — I won’t let a difficulty get in the way of my goals because I can overcome it with resiliency. Learning Namae wo yobuyo taught me to take the first step and keep going despite all the hardships, because it may progress into something even greater than I expected.

Namae wo yobuyo is a song that reminds me I am the main character of my own story, a song that brought me confidence to move on from something that has been apart of my life for years, a song I’d play to remind myself I can face any challenges, and most importantly a song that is a constant reminder of my rediscovered values.