

## ‘Music’ by Abigail J. – Year 10

Music: vocal or instrumental sounds combined in a way to produce beauty and expressions of emotion. Oh, how I miss sounds’ symphonies, harmonies, orchestras, choirs, and solos. Woodwind, strings, percussion, and brass. Feelings flooding pages, delicately detailed. It stung tears from eyes and laughter from hearts; it brought hope in darkest of days. It was a way of life. It was an art. It gave the blind, sight: colours, valleys, mountains, and rivers. Music made this world.

I miss the memories that accompanied music. Now, even thinking makes so much noise that it reverberates in this echoing silence. No noise exceeding 40 decibels permitted. No noise above this range without explicit permission. Now even the birds are hushed, eliminated, or caged prisoners. The newest generations haven’t even learnt speech.

I can remember that day. The day it sounded. I can understand, yet not fathom why they would allow us to live in silence. A world of whispers, slipping dry pages, devoid of laughter or music.

I can still remember the sounds of the needle, gliding across the grooves. Grooves as original as fingerprints and as diverse as the magic cast. Those large discs spinning, a pirouette of a melody each turn, gliding up and down the octaves ringing out. In my mind's eye, I can see the love of professionals as they play their

instruments. Carrying cases, and necks, like a frail lover. The kisses that were planted on the gold and silver metals.

But now they sit. Strings, screaming for a gentle caress of strumming fingers. Mouth pieces waiting to feel a kiss. Pianos, longing for a touch, a beat, or legato notes. They all sit, gathering dust like discarded ornaments or statues. Record players, waiting to trace the spines of records.

My record player sits. The ancient thing, precious and beautiful. A rare antique, even in my youth. It stares longingly at cardboard cases. I feel my fingers twitch and I start to reach out my arms to set free the circles from their prison. To carve out dusted beauty from grooves, but I hesitate, a moment, remembering the consequences.

I turn away and stare at the book shelves. I creak oaken bones, and stretch out cobwebbed tendons as I reach for the books, but as I look at the titles, they blur and mix like paint. My eyes fail me, as does my courage. One note, one song? It wouldn't harm anyone, surely? No, only perhaps, myself, and that threat is enough to hang my wishes in a noose. I lean back, fearful of my back creaking too loudly, or the seat squeaking. Once comfortable, I glance back over at the record player.

My whole heart yearning to hear a beat, a melody, a tune.

Music makes me think of her. But she too, has left, like all the sounds. She died, when it played. The sound that killed most of our population. Over 185

decibels, pulsing through any device with a speaker: phones, televisions. All chiming blaring sounds. The bunkers' doors closed off the passage, people queuing still, discarding gadgets. Then realisation dawned, as the barriers were slowly pulled. The same face echoed across the corridor, before the doors eclipsed them, closing into a final slit, framing her face, reflecting fearful emotions back.

I still hate remembering. She wanted to go back, go and retrieve something, that left me waiting down below. All the discarded gadgets, echoed round that room with her, murdering her. Lungs bursting in changes of pressure, heart attacks or air embolisms.

The record player sat, reminiscing over memories it experienced too. She always told me that music sounded better from antiques. It was 'more genuine, beautiful' than that of the electronic music. She would always tremble slightly as she spoke her emotions, raging passion. She brought the record player home once. She played it all the time. I would treat her to different records, watching her prance and sing.

When I proposed to her, I gave her a disc and when she leaped up to go play it, discovering it not turning. I'd only unplugged and attached a ring to the plastic, but her eyes lit up, like wood catching kindling. Discarding the disc: "Yes", yes. She let it spin on, round and round, clock like.

I felt myself succumbing to the temptation of hearing music, luring me in like baiting fish, hooked, and I couldn't free myself, reeled further in. Welcomed back into the world of music.

I drowned in the beauty, the overwhelming emotions, sweeping over in floods. A disc, playing the sweeping sounds of dramatic bow strokes, accompanied the piano. The whole world sighed, as the music flushed life back into veins. I flicked through cases, growing younger each time the melodies splintered. My movements nimbler, my skin moistening, and fitting my frame. I fumbled through the cases, searching for that one record... No, it can't be, not this. Please no. She went back for it, didn't she? All these years, I thought I still had it. But no, she did. She went to retrieve it. Why didn't I stop her? With her I would be able to suffer this torture.

I took the case and record player, sweeping the dust off them. Admiring the colours, the ringed grooves, the effort put into piecing each note one by one, to make masterpieces.

I led it outside, welcoming weight in my weakened limbs. I let the music rip free from the dusted grooves. I let the tunes free in the street. I sang along, and let the youths listen to songs of age. I laughed and cried. Adults and the rest of the ancients, pursued the music and they too sang, wept, and laughed. They basked in beauty, as they would the sun. Fresher generations, laughed. The entire community

was united, in beauty. Then everyone began to collapse, blood blossoming from gaping wounds. Quiet thuds triggered the next domino to collapse, rippling.

I thought I was the only one threatened...