

Not even close

The sun cast its orange glow upon the world, waking everything up that was in a deep slumber. Summer was almost around the corner, and these were the first signs of a better time ahead. But for me, that better time would have to wait just a little while longer. I was a prisoner to my bed, to my own cage of pain. The migraine had struck me earlier that day, making me crave darkness and silence. I always wondered why my head wouldn't just crack open when the pain was throbbing around my skull. Ever since I was a little boy, they would flare up once in a while, so migraines weren't that uncommon to me. In my early twenties, it even got so bad that I suffered from at least one attack once a week. I knew this was coming the moment my sense of smell started to increase. The moment I could start smelling things from far away, I knew I was done for. The next symptom was light sensitivity. Not that this was that uncommon to me; whenever the first rays of sunshine started coming through the clouds, I would grab my sunglasses, protecting my eyes from the invisible laser beams. At least that's what my imagination came up with.

The curtains of my bedroom were drawn shut, blocking every sign of light. Not even the smallest particle of light could penetrate those curtains. A pitch-black room always seemed to work best for me. When I closed my eyes, it would feel like I was in a thunderstorm. No rain, but flashes of light were everywhere. All sound seemed to move out, all in one direction. I only had about three hours left for the pills to do their job. In three hours I had to meet my sister at the airport for our trip to Japan. From the moment I enrolled in high school, I was obsessed with Japan. It was one of my close friends who had introduced me to the world of anime. It started with Naruto, an anime show based on the manga series written by Masahi Kishimoto. It was about an adolescent ninja who was searching for acceptance from his peers, who ignored him since he was a young boy. His dream was to become Hokage, the leader of his village. The reason I liked that show was that I was drawn to the coming-of-age theme. I placed myself in the footsteps of Naruto, wanting to become acknowledged myself. I didn't have many friends growing up, no one who could stand up for me. My best friend

Lucas was in another school, otherwise, he would have beaten the crap out of my bullies. But for some reason, we both chose a different school to attend after elementary. Lucas was always good with his hands, so it wasn't a surprise he chose a school where he could study mechanics. While I was better with my words. Even though I was the quietest boy in the entire school, if you could make me open up to you, there wasn't an argument I couldn't win. It took me a year extra, but eventually, I graduated in sales. I deliberately chose this course because I was good at languages, even though I knew I was bad with numbers. Perhaps art school wouldn't have been a bad choice either. I may not have been good with my hands, but whenever I took a paintbrush between my fingers, amazing pieces of art came flowing out of my brushes and onto my canvasses. Edward Hopper was my greatest influence. An American realist painter who was famous for his oil paintings of isolated figures. My two favorite pieces from Hopper were, of course, Nighthawks, a painting that portrayed people in a downtown diner late at night, and Gas, which illustrated an American gas station at the end of a lonely country road. Being lonely all the time can influence one's point of view on art. For me, I would always be drawn into the scenery of loneliness. On several occasions, I would head out to the woods to paint the landscape in which I felt most confident. So it wasn't a surprise that my lifelong dream was to become a successful artist. After I graduated high school, my parents had allowed me to take a gap year for me to try and pursue that dream of mine. Eight months into my gap year and here we are, confined to bed rest to cure my migraine and not even close to becoming a successful painter.