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## The Encyclopedia of my Life

My life has always been full of lists, responsibilities, standards, and rules. On any day, if I get asked the question, “Are you busy today?” A list of ten things that I have to remember to complete will run through my head. But do not be mistaken, my life is also full of love. Between my many responsibilities I find my cheeks sore from laughing too much on a daily basis. I try to take time to appreciate all that I love in my life. *The Encyclopedia of my Life* is not just a list of things that I like or a chance for me to be sappy about a few very important people; It is a space for me to celebrate all the details of my life that others don’t seem to take time to notice.

- Anna Maria Island

My personal slice of paradise that the rest of the world has seem to forget. My only companions on this little island are my family members, a handful of senior citizens, and the personnel who run the few businesses situated on the island. Of course, this list does not include the snails, crabs, fish, sea turtles, birds, worms, lizards, and toads that I’ve grown so accustomed to when I return to my favorite sleepy island. Many vacations were spent longing for our beach in Via Roma. My sleepy slice of paradise. I miss you everyday. (see *Beach* for more details)

- Band

A collection of the nerdiest and most dedicated people in the school. Band for me was always about the music. Nothing mattered but the music. Even if the overall sound was bad, all I cared about was the emotion that the music was going to invoke in the audience.

- Beach

I used to hate the beach. My parents tell me that as a baby, I used to waddle away from my family saying, “I wanna go home. I’m gonna go home.” I hated the sand. I hated the water. I hated the seagulls. I hated the heat. Maybe it was the years of bitter winter snowstorms that barricaded me in my home, praying to any god that the sun would touch my skin again, but somehow my hatred turned to love and now I crave the beach.

The beach is one big hug from the sun (see *Sunshine* for more details). My favorite moment with the beach was during a family vacation to Florida in October 2016. It was sunset, and the gradient of colors of the sky made my heart cry because they were so extravagant. The temperature was pleasant, but not too hot. The water of the ocean was calm, warm, and inviting. I waded out into the ocean by myself and had a moment with the beach. It was like I was having a conversation with nature in my head. I thanked the

sky and the sun for creating such a display for me. I thanked the ocean waves for brushing against my legs and giving me comfort. I thanked the fish and sand for hugging my toes. I thanked the world for being so at peace with me in that moment.

I fell in love with the beach it seemed for the first time that day, and my heart has longed for that moment ever since. In times of struggle, I look back to pictures of that sunset, or try to remember exactly how the warmth hit my body. That was one of my favorite days of my life.

- **Chocolate Chip Cookies**

I open my heavy wooden door, and a wall of sweet scent hits me. The chocolate and sugar combination beg me to travel down the stairs to the open kitchen. As the scent grows stronger my eyes meet my mother's. She rarely worked in the kitchen unless she had to, but on days like this, when she chose to be in the kitchen for delight instead of necessity, you could tell that it made her happy. Rounding the corner my eyes finally find what I've wanted all along: the warm, melt-in-your mouth, perfectly round chocolate chip cookies awaiting me on the cooling rack. They are delectable. Just one will never be enough. Some of my best afternoons at home were started with homemade chocolate chip cookies.

- **Concert Pits**

A mass of passionate and sweaty youth who all have one love in common. I live my life concert-to-concert. The best moment of a concert is when the band stops playing all together in the middle of a song. The group screams the words with all the passion they can muster. That might be the most beautiful part of a concert pit - the group. The crowd is made up by individuals, including myself, but a concert pit brings us all together. The pit creates a mob of love for music, and it is so easy to lose yourself in the hundreds of people.

The band smiles down at the sea of people as we reflect the art that they've reacted for us. Even if no individual in the crowd can sing, the mass of voices created a chorus-like sound, almost a visual wave of song in the air. I've felt breathless in a concert pit before, but it was never out of fear or anger. It is always out of overwhelming love for the moment that I let engulf me.

- **Disney**

On sick days when I can barely get out of bed except to go to the bathroom and replenish my water cup, I find myself with a collection of VHS tapes, each with a different Disney princess's story on them. Every song is family. Each story knows me as much as I know them. Disney World might be the most magical place on Earth, but even the movies make my weakest days bearable.

- **Car**

My car has become more of a home to me than my room. I've spent countless hours going from city to city jamming out in my car. My car has never broken down on me and rarely creates problems. Even if I am not driving somewhere far away from my problems, I can always escape from the stress of life with a car ride.

- Ean

I've known this tall, occasionally blue-haired boy since my Freshman year in high school. This is a person who would rather sit in his fluffy robe with his dog on his lap while playing video games all day than do anything else. He reads poetry and truly observes the world around him, but you wouldn't know this by talking to him just once.

He first comes off pessimistic as hell, but if you crack his shell he is the biggest sweet heart in the world. At first glance, you would think that he hates his life and everything in it and that nothing good happens in the world of Ean Johnson, but none of that is true, and maybe that's why I appreciate Ean so much.

- Flowers

A small, simple joy. Even when I am at my lowest, I remember to appreciate the little things in life, like a pop of yellow in a sea of green and brown.

- Flying

I love the feeling on planes when your stomach drops as you change altitude and you can't form thoughts because the world is so far from your feet. I love looking out the small windows and seeing everything that I've ever known in an entirely new perspective. I love that people, cars, building, and worries are so far away while I'm in a plane. I love the attention to detail that is required to be able to fly. I love the combination of science, math, and skill that creates a pilot. Flying planes is all I want to do with my life - and I would do anything to accomplish that.

- Guacamole

Self-control is unknown when a bowl of guacamole is in front of me. Seriously, it doesn't matter if I have just finished off a seven course feast, if there is guacamole available I will find it and I will finish it.

The first time I tried guacamole and fell in love, my mother was ecstatic. "Your Grami would be so happy that you love avocados! She was the only one in her family that liked avocados, I am the only one of my siblings that likes avocados, and now you are the only one that likes avocados out of your siblings!" She said all this with a glimmer in her eye. I know that she wasn't just smiling for herself.

- *Hamilton*

*Hamilton* is a Broadway play about the life of Alexander Hamilton that incorporates hard hitting hip hop beats unlike any other Broadway musical. This play is also unique

because you can understand the entire plot simply by listening to the soundtrack.

*Hamilton* means so much to me, because Alexander spent his whole life fighting for what he wants. At times when I felt so beat down, all I would have to do is listen to *Hamilton* songs and I would be inspired all over again. The plot, songs, and characters never got old. Lin-Manuel Miranda is a genius.

- *The Hobbit*

The most impactful story of my life. The glue that first pulled Renee and I together. The symbol of my acorn necklace. A beautiful story that brought to life the love, adventure, and courage of a simple Hobbit that ended up changing the world of Middle Earth and my entire life.

- Jackson's house

There are never any bad vibes in Jackson's home. The Maurers are always inviting. There is always enough food and there are always a group of high schoolers running around somewhere. The sunroom is always open for card games and mafia. The nearby cornfield is always available for goofing around in. The basement is always there to watch movies and play with nerf guns. There is always a good time at the Maurer household.

- Luke

A chunky little bundle of joy who I love with all my heart. Luke is basically a mutt of a dog, he is black all over with the exception of his front toes and his belly. His tongue is pink with black spots towards the back that only shows when he smiles up at you. Luke's personality shines through every day. This boy loves to cuddle. I'll be awoken in the mornings by Luke jumping on my bed, giving me a quick kiss on my cheek, and then settling down next to me for the early hours of the morning. If he is unable to get into my room to cuddle he complains relentlessly until he gets his morning cuddles. This is just one example of why he is the sweetest dog.

- Mario Kart

A work of genius. (see *Nerts* for similar emotions) Losing is not an option. Endless hours were spent with each car, each character, and each track. I still know every song by heart.

- Matt

Matt is many things. On the surface level he is a lanky, curly haired kid who loves video games and giggles at his own jokes, but through my high school years he has become a lot more than just a jokester to me. He's the one who I bounce ideas off. The person I go to when I need guidance and thoughtful opinions. I probably wouldn't know what to do with myself without him. He is a vital friend, and I don't see that changing. Matt has learned a lot from me, and I've learned so much from him. I would be a much more lonely person without him.

- Morgan

Many people have come and gone in my life, yet there is one person who has been through everything with me. I met Morgan at church camp in elementary school for a week, then our paths didn't cross again until 5th grade. We had a class together and found friendship within each other, and the story goes from there. Morgan is the only one in my life who has consistently had my back through everything. We have changed completely since we first met, but we always seem to change together. It would be a mistake to call anyone else my best friend throughout my childhood.

- Museums  
Endless wonder and knowledge in a beautiful building that consumes all attention and leaves me wide eyed. Every museum holds new and unique knowledge, most that I won't use in my everyday life, but I will always enjoy to learn it. Museums showcase such simple things in a wonderful way.
- Nerts  
Nerts is a high speed card game that my brother brought to my family a few years ago. Everyone has their own deck of cards. They play solitaire in front of themselves, and in the middle everyone is creating stacks of suits, ace-king, to get rid of cards. This game is very hard to learn, and even harder to get skilled in. Once I got the hang of this game, I never wanted to stop playing. Much like my need to win in Mario Kart, Nerts brings out my competitive personality and relentless concentration to the game. Whenever someone asks what card game I would like to play, Nerts is my answer everytime without fail. Why is it so intense? Even I don't know. But I love it.
- *Phantom of the Opera*  
At first I just thought it was a work of musical genius, then I saw the musical in all of its Broadway glory and the entire show was transformed into so much more. The artistry, costumes, set design were all too amazing for my eyes. The classic Broadway sounding songs blare from my car speakers every so often. Even though I am not trained to sing opera, you can find me singing at the top of my lungs to every single song.
- Ruby  
My lanky, red doberman has always been in my life. I remember the day that we got her, we had to race another family to the shelter because they also wanted to adopt a red doberman and she was the only one left. Somehow - even though we were farther away than the other family - we got there first and just like that, Ruby came into our lives. She used to be so small. The size of her head now is how big her entire body was the day that we got her. Ruby is the most unique dog I've ever gotten to know. Her face is very expressive. She smiles, she yawns, she pouts, she smirks, she's mean, she is wonderful.

The most unique thing that she does is her morning face rub. Every morning, she trots into my parent's room, gets down on her front "elbows" and rubs the sides of her face

into the rug. My family figured out that this is her version of washing her face, or itching it, we are still hypothesising. She has so many weird traits and habits.

- Singing

An activity that I am not especially talented in, but I still continuously fill my day with. One memory of singing that sticks out to me happened in the summer of 2016. It was a warm afternoon, my car was completely filled with friends that I adore. We were driving down from the top of the parking garage in downtown Battle Creek with all the windows down. Someone had put on a throwback song and the five of us screamed the lyrics like it was the most important words to ever come out of our mouths. We didn't care that we all sounded like utter crap. We were so filled with joy to be singing a song that we knew every word to and to be with each other. And that is what singing means to me. Togetherness.

- Skylar

There was never a time when I knew Skylar and she was not my best friend. The first time that we hung out just the two of us, we sat in my car in the Harper Creek parking lot and did nothing but make stupid jokes and listen to music. We were so content with each other, and that's never changed. I spend nearly every day with her simply because I know I will miss her if I don't. I've grown to look over to my passenger seat in my car and expect to see her. We've never had the chance to fight with each other because we are too busy talking to each other about religion, existence, parents, humanity, forgiveness, life experiences, stupid jokes, and our favorite song lyrics. We've had time to talk about basically everything and through all of those conversations we've learned almost everything about each other. When I think of Skylar I see a reflection of myself. We are so similar, and she makes the weight of the world a whole lot lighter on my shoulders.

- *Star Wars*

Without fail, the songs from *Star Wars* reach out to all the Hainlines and forces them to all be together, watching these movies with wide eyes and childlike smiles. *Star Wars* speaks to all of us for different reasons, yet we all love it for the same.

My first *Star Wars* movie that I saw in theater was *The Force Awakens*, but that is not true for my brother, Mitch, and my dad. When the story line crawled onto the giant screen and the classic music boomed through the theater, I glanced over at my family and the two of them had stars in their wide eyes. I could tell that they had fallen back onto the memory of the two of them sitting in a movie theater much like that many years ago to watch the prequel movies. It was a wonderful moment for each member of my family, and it's all because of *Star Wars*.

- Sunshine

A classic Romeo and Juliet story. I love to have the sun kiss and hug my every cell, but my vitiligo forces us apart. I would do anything to be able to be with the sunshine

everyday. Days filled with sunshine are much easier to be happy in than days filled with snow or rain.

- Trail walking  
On warm sunny days in Michigan all I want to do is be outside. Even in the spring when it is still 45 degrees outside, if it is sunny I will find a way to bear the cold so that I can enjoy the sun. My favorite way to enjoy the sunshine is to find a nature trail and enjoy the day in the woods. (see *Sunshine* for similar)
- Wicked  
On my 18th birthday, my family surprised me with ticket to see Wicked that very night. Usually when I get tickets to a show, I have to wait months and my anticipation grows while I wait. This was the only experience when they were like Surprise! Tickets! WE'RE GOING TO SEE IT RIGHT NOW! It was crazy. I didn't know anything about the plot, characters, or songs. I fell in love with that production with every new thing that they had to throw at me. Now - 4 months after I first saw the show - the songs are still daily running through my head and my car speakers.

I hope that through these few stories about my life you have learned a little about me and my crazy, nonstop, unprecedented life. Through this process of writing and remembering my favorite moments and people, I have found myself taking time to appreciate subtle details. The wind softly blowing my hair. The way my best friend sings an old song. The opening theme of my favorite TV show. I can only hope that after reading through the details of my life, that you will start to notice the details in yours. Life is full of such wonderful things. There's no better time to notice them than right now.