

## “The Road” Playlist

The repeated high notes of the “Jewel Box I,” By Toshiya Sukegawa musically demonstrate the boy’s repeated optimism, even after low points. A specific occurrence of his vital positivity is his insistence on sharing with the man. This can be seen through their exchange of hot water on page 21, with the boy saying “you promised not to do that,” after the man only pours water for the boy. After this, they split the water, pleading with the boy and physically satisfying the man despite his mental dismay. The use of “promised” implies that this prompting of sharing has been initiated by the boy, furthering his connection to the music by his generosity persisting despite the dark undertone of their world, just like the light melody of the notes over the darker chords.

“I Hate Everything About you” by Three Day’s Grace would be included in “The Road” playlist because the boy and man both are unable to find any joy in the world they currently live in. The title of the song and first line of the chorus, “I hate everything about you” connects to the exchange between the duo on page 48 “I’m really hungry Papa,” “I know” by showing a joint consensus between the two in regards to the negative situation their new world has put them in. The ending of the chorus, “Why do you love me” relates to the story by posing the question, why does the duo stay alive? Are they truly “survivors” like the man told the deceased woman? Or are they too afraid to leave the only existence they’ve ever known? This song’s ability to display both positive and negative emotions relates to “The Road” by illustrating the boy and man’s complicated relationship with the world they live in.

“Just me and You” by the Dreamliners illustrates the relationship the man has made with the boy in which they are the only “good” people. After seeing tracks in the road, the man tells

the boy that “[they] need to get off the road, someone’s coming (62).” The boy asks if they’re “bad guys” and the man replies “Yes.” Despite the man’s definitive claim, he has no inkling of the moral ambiguity the person who passed through the road possesses. Instead, he is assuming they are bad because of his devotion to the boy. This relates to the song through its repetition of the phrase “never part,” by showing what the man is willing to do to ensure he and the boy stay together. By making everyone else “bad,” the boy will only be able to rely on the man, ensuring he stays with the man and the duo never breaks apart.

“Listen Before I Go,” By Billie Eilish relates to “The Road” by illustrating the woman’s statement before her death. Like the woman’s monologue, the song describes the last wishes and desires of someone on the verge of suicide. An interesting commonality between the two pieces of writing is their acknowledgment and resistance to staying alive for others. While pleading for the woman’s life, the man says “[he] can’t do it alone,” to which the woman responds “then don’t.” Like the woman, Eilish instructs the listener to “call her friends and tell them that [she] loves them and [she’ll] miss them, but she’s not sorry.” Both woman value the loss of their lives over what their life can give to others, illustrating an interesting commonality between the two pieces of writing in which the depth of a female character reaches its peak at her reasoning to die.

“Let you Break my Heart Again,” by Laufey depicts the boy’s cycle of belief in the man to listen to him. Throughout the story, no matter the context, the boy never wants to stay in a house. Each time he voices his disdain, he is met with the man’s disregard for his desire. While searching the house of the unknown amputators, the boy says that “[They] should go…” and that “[he] is not hungry (108)” despite physically starving. The man says that they are starving and therefore can not leave the house without confirming it has no food. This relates to “Let you

Break my Heart Again” because both songs express a cycle of irrational feelings. Despite wanting to leave, the man never agrees with the boy, making the boy’s reasoning to use the same tactics of convincing irrational based on the man’s consistent behavior. Like the boy, the author of the song describes a cycle of irrationality in which they envision their friend as their love interest until they “break [their] heart again” and make it clear that the author’s desires will never occur. Both the boy and author of the song share a mindset in which their desires are not compatible with their realities, illustrating a cycle of irrationality and the reasoning behind this song’s inclusion in “The Road” playlist.