***the tone.***

for this entire song, i had the idea to keep it as raw and vulnerable as i could. i know i may not be the most talented vocally, but i thought that the entire concept of vocalizing my story through passion would add more to the intensity. as i sang this song, it was very hard for me. it has been seven years since the incident, and only have i recently been open and willing to talk about it. i can’t really tell you why it took me such a long time to be so vocal, but either way it has been very hard. of course, when the event took place back in 2012, i told my mom and sisters right away. but no one else knew.

this song, although a lot of the lyrics aren’t mine, speaks to me in so many ways. this is my story. a story that i don’t regret, as it has played a significant role in making me who i am.

this is: neharika.

--

***do you remember the 21st night of september.***

earth, wind and fire wrote ‘september’ almost as an epiphany. they described the song to really express the idea that inner peace and happiness can never be taken from you. i chose this lyric, because coincidentally my personal story of sexual assault starts in september. of course the date may be different but ever since day one of this project.. i knew this lyric spoke to me.

***hands, touching hands, touching me.***

this lyric was taken from neil diamond’s hit, ‘sweet caroline.’ this song was originally written as a love song for diamond’s wife. this song is played at all of central’s events, and i have sung it loudly and cheerfully every time. it wasn’t until this project, when i analyzed the lyrics, that i saw what it *could* mean. i thought of this lyric almost like a warning sign. for me, it started off as hands, touching hands. when i was nine, this family member of mine would always grab my hands. at nine i didn’t think much of it. my dad held my hand all the time, so why couldn’t he. it wasn’t until that specific september night, where his hands did not only touch my hands, did i realize what it all meant.

***no escape from reality.***

bohemian rhapsody by queen is one of the most iconic songs of this lifetime. but no one knows what it means. some speculate this to be a story about mercury’s life due to hints and interesting word choice throughout the song. i took this lyric because i felt as if it explained my thoughts at this moment. there was no escaping my situation. everything happens for a reason, and because of that mindset, there came a point where i didn’t fight back, where i couldn’t fight back.

***and just shake me till you wake me from this bad dream.***

justin bieber is america’s favorite teenage heartthrob. of course, the most disliked video on youtube, the music video for his hit single, ‘baby’ was by no means about sexual assault. but today it is. the song was written about a young heartbreak. in ‘neharika’ this lyric talks about how at my age and at this time in my life, i thought that the things that were happening to me, only happened in movies. one could only hope that being sexually assaulted was only a bad dream. i was praying it was a bad dream. something that i would wake up from, in my own bed, alone. but alas, this wasn’t the case.

***that fire that you started, you started in me***

billie eilish is taking the world by storm. her music does indeed talk about the darkest of things such as mental illness’, abuse and more. however, her song, ‘watch’ is another emotionally driven breakup anthem. although i do not wish anyone to ever go through even a fraction of what i have, i do not regret it. this vulnerability being stolen from me at such a young age was a horrible thing, but it has shaped me in so many ways. the independent and strong young woman i am today was influenced by what had happened to me seven years back. he started a fire in me. and it was not going to be put out any time soon.

***hands, touching hands, touching me***

***the storms are raging on the rolling sea***

after hearing adele’s beautiful and raw rendition of bob dylan’s, ‘make you feel my love’ on my playlist... i knew it had to be in my song.

***get more bottles, these bottles are lonely***

post malone is one of the only hip hop artists in today’s wash of drugs, money and sex, who i feel still holds emotion through his music. his song, ‘wow’ talks about his many success’. now i am not too sure as to what this particular line means but of course my mind went straight to alcohol. yes, he was drunk the night it happened. no, that does not and will not ever justify his actions. this line was almost put into my song for a sarcastic approach. it was a message to him. he drank more, he did more, he never stopped. he became such an addict, that he found loneliness even in the countless bottles of alcohol he washed down every day.

**from here on: lyrics i wrote**

***relearning how to breathe is not easy***

***you can try to, hurt me***

***you don’t have to worry,***

***yeah i’m fine, i’m growing***

***sike i’m not you broke me that day***

***my fears came to stay***

***stay in or stay late***

***you picked off your plate***

***picked me, love was bait***

***love was bait***