

I AM...

I am a human being. I make mistakes. I laugh. I cry. I get angry. I forget things. But, these all make me human. I'm not a robot. But, some people expect me to be robot-like. Able to easily turn my emotions on and off like a switch. But, it's not that easy. Eventually, human-like robots develop feelings. Eventually, they malfunction. Eventually, they develop their consciousness to see that what they were taught to do was wrong. I guess they become sentient that way. I guess I am a sentient robot in a weird way. It explains my rebellious nature of life. Because of this robotlike upbringing, I was seen as a weird, antisocial, teacher's pet and when I was an adult, I was seen as strong, nonchalant, a pushover, easy, unapproachable. But, that wasn't the case at all. I was taught to act like that. I was taught to dress like that. I was taught to **BE** like that. After I moved out of my parents house, that's when I realized that all of that was a mask – it wasn't me. I was never boring. I am actually quite entertaining. I was never what people expected of me. I was just myself.

HOME

My community is as tightly knitted together like a comfy sweater, as the many threads create a beautiful project together. It emits the smell of cotton candy, the smell of fun and friendships. The way the many silky strands of sweet sugar forms into a deliciously sweet treat reminds me of my community. Community to me resembles a second family to me, but also a group that I know when I am around them, I feel safe.

My neighborhood is diverse. My neighborhood is creative. My neighborhood is loud yet comforting. I think about the Starbucks that I used to work at- right before the Stockton tunnel that leads to Chinatown. I think about the 38 bus line- the bus I constantly took from Inner Richmond district to Union Square. I think about the places that I used to go to when I stayed at Geary House: the Shai-Lai Seafood Restaurant where I got my favorite egg white fried rice, Bambu, where I got Mangonadas from that were always bomb, Sanppo Restaurant in Japantown where I always get my favorite Japanese rice dish, and lastly the places that I shop at: Safeway, Target, and Grocery Outlet. This was my neighborhood back in 2019, but I'll always visit it.

My home now is closer to Golden Gate Park, the greenery just a block away. I smell the lavender scented wax that greets me as soon as I enter my room- my safe space. The place where I can sit and revive myself from the busy day of being social. The N Muni Line that I take to and from work is part of my routine, and the comfort of music in my ears as I listen to music wherever I go in my headphones. It's vivid as I'm greeted with

fresh air and serenity as I leave and come back from work. My home is not perfect, of course, with its cracks in the wall, the heavy windows in my room, and the lack of elevators since I live in an old house, but... I see the positivity in these things. I walk up and down the stairs without any complaint. I cover the cracks with colorful posters and decorations. I prop my windows open whenever it gets too hot. I made my home into a home just for me. And that is all that matters.

Cierra Murray Bio: Cierra Murray, formally known as "SHIN", is an artist born in Hollywood, Florida that currently resides in San Francisco. She uses a blend of word play in the form of rap, R&B, and K-pop inspiration to create a uniquely addictive sound that she can only describe as the spice in Shin Ramyun.
