

Epiphany Essay



We stared at our new school, struck by the paucity of its size and the vastness of its ideal. We felt vulnerable, like we'd traveled back in time almost two weeks and we were standing on the metaphorical and literal threshold of high school again. One first day was enough, we decided.

After our mom bought the tickets, we walked through a little tent area, got our hands stamped, and walked into the stadium. Well, the two sets of bleachers and football field.

We felt doubly uncomfortable, as this was both a social situation and a new experience. As our anxiety peaked, our mom hung around, apprising us of the many safeguards she had put in place to prevent us from being kidnapped while we looked around desperately for our friends.

Finally, we saw our friends waving us over from the top of the stairs and we hurriedly concluded our conversation with a "Yep. Bye, mom."

The game went by swiftly after that. We all laughed at the ridiculous and the random. We gossiped about dates and others' drug use and all the topics perceived to be mature that we had day dreamed about when our friends were afraid to say the word 'sex'. We discussed the serious, 'adult' issues that were everything to all of us now and might even, dare we imply it, not seem farcical in five years' time.

Over the course of the night, through the conversation and our situation, we felt an unavoidable, inherent sense of importance surrounding .

We were sitting on a hill, overlooking the disregarded football game. Suddenly, staring at the green-tinged, twilight horizon, listening to our friends talk, feeling the balmy late summer air on our face and the cool grass between our fingers, somewhere in the back of our head, a switch was flipped. Something about my circumstances finally registered with me.

This year was a blank slate. Everything had changed. I had a new school, new chances to make friends, to do great things, to find my passion, to get over my fear of public speaking, to get a bad haircut, to be stupid, to laugh and cry, and to change things. There were so many clubs, classes, and opportunities, as well as an entire untouched, pristine world for me to explore. I was also facing so much new adversity; the calamity of college and jobs, the tribulations of homework and stress, the veritable cataclysm that was high school friendships and relationships. But, despite my slightly heightened amount of teen malaise, I felt infinitely hopeful and confident in myself to conquer everything in front of me.

At the end of the night, I grudgingly left with my mom after a few dozen reluctant goodbyes. When I got home I bounded up the stairs into my room, feeling buoyant, planning to text my friends as soon as I could get to a charger. I plopped down on my bed, tired after a long evening.

I mulled over the miraculous realization that I just recently had. As I considered the new lease I had on my circumstances, some kind of Kit Kat/Dr.Pepper/sub-sub-par popcorn high wore off.

Nothing real and meaningful had changed. All of the classes, ideas, sex jokes, and occupational ultimatums were the same. We now have a slightly different place to do the same things at, are surrounded by slightly different people, and are given more homework. We thought that high school was going to be an extravaganza of poignancy and wit, like the angsty love-child of *Grease* and *The Breakfast Club* with less singing. We thought the same about fifth grade, and then sixth, and then eighth. The reality is we romanticize other's situations because we are dissatisfied with our own and we can't experience or understand all the disadvantages and downsides to the other's.

While less enjoyable than the misplaced yet steadfast belief that everything in high school will be nothing short of cinematic, our epiphany is more helpful. It has made us think of high school as less of a to-do list with empty boxes like, in some ways, middle school was for us. Instead, it helps us cope with the mind-numbing tedium of everyday existence and enjoy the bright, better parts of life more profoundly.