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Graduation day – shaking, nervous, ready to venture out of the high school world. This is the beginning and the end of a journey to what our lives will ultimately come to. Next year, we won’t be back, but now we’ll be heading off, starting at the bottom of the chain again. The whole stadium seems to echo, sounding only with everyone’s pounding hearts in their chest.

Next year, we’ll be paying for school, living off of Top Ramen, and awaiting this last step that determines how the rest of our lives will pan out. Some being something as prestigious as an MD or lawyer, some heading to community college or trade schools, some just heading straight into careers. I always hear people saying, “ Won’t it be weird when we all see each other in 10 years?” It’s weird now; separating from people we’ve known a good part of our lives; whether we just know them or they were vital parts of our high school life. The steps begin, as everyone walks in a single file line to the cold seats we’ll sit in. Sitting there, reflecting on the past twelve to thirteen years of our lives. Someone must have pushed a fast forward button, like our lives are a movie and we hold no sense of stopping time.

As the song Breathe goes, “ Life’s just an hourglass glued to the table… Breathe, just breathe.” Our parents sit in the standing, fingers twiddling and biting their lips, waiting for their own flesh and blood to walk up and grab their diplomas. It’s history repeating itself over and over. Tears roll down our parent’s faces, a mesmerized moment when they once were up there and now, us, their children are. It signals the end of our childhood, and a start to a brand new life from our old lives. Hands shaking, tapping our feet, anxiously as each name is called up.

The next moments flash by. We all acquire our turn to stand on stage, smiling, grabbing the framed diploma, then a flash… The anxiety silences. It’s one of those things you waste your whole childhood dreaming about, and now that the moment is here, you don’t know how to react. Boxes and moving trucks will soon fill our lives at the beginning of the year; memories all tightly packed away to make room for more. Time stands still.

Hearts race. Hands clenched, hand in hand. Tears streaming down our faces. A glance at each other. Unknowing fills each pair of eyes. Life continues on.

As simple as that.