



Isn't this fifth-period math with Mrs. What-is-her-name-again? I think. Turning to run, I realized I am standing in front of the big doors of the band hall, stupefied, the band hall hovering over me like a monster ready to gobble its prey. This is surely the worst-that-can-happen scenario at the start of the year, but hope is near. Obviously, the events within my story reveal a universal truth: once one lives through hardship, there will be optimism. School is often thought of as excitement, as jumpy, sunshine-gold, or soft, delicious peach, maybe even right-in-your-face bright magenta, but school for me was the opposite side of the color wheel. Slate blue. I knew no one in my new classes. Like one lonely drop of paint. Fizzing like carbonated water after being shaken as I try to find a friend, a companion, a just-someone-that-is-here-to-finally-help-me-end-this-grief-of-being-alone anyone. Then, lunch arrives, and confusion strikes. Random slabs of paint hover around me. Pure red. Students talk to others they have known for six years. People ran, cramming into tables, chairs, benches, and every possible place that they could sit. I squeezed between a narrow gap made by two students to sit. On a rim of concrete surrounding bushes. The rim of a big pot. Eighth graders jumped on tables like popcorn in a popcorn machine, stealing my attention away from my sandwich. One of them was wearing what seemed to be a penguin suit, the fluffy ones that would make an excellent pajama, with the bottom cut out so it resembles a dress. Not to mention that the eighth grader was a boy. Wearing a penguin-pajama dress. A fire alarm blares in my ear. The alarm and chatter were so realistic, so loud that I had to yell to peers, not across the courtyard, but right next to me. Suddenly, the internal conflicts dilapidated. Deep inside me, off-white-colored hope spread. Even though storms persist, rainbows always wait until the end.