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The Vernal Pool

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Peer reviewed|Undergraduate

A Split Second

By Kelvin Soza

High school graduation - a milestone for most, a pitstop for me. At different times of the day, rushed, honored, and dumbfounded, I questioned myself the reasoning behind high school graduation. Why is it there? Why is it so celebrated? Why is it something to look forward to?

I stood near a group of friends anticipating commencement, all of us in our white, honor student gowns. To me, the white gowns were beyond any form of excellence or 4.0 GPAs, they symbolized momentum for what were to come in life. The blue Key Club pin stamped to my chest reminded me of every emotion, every ride I had operated for the children at the local Kiddieland amusement park, and most of all, every personal connection I had made with those unfortunate during the cold holidays. I tried to make sense of how fast it had all transpired. The little things were a thing of the past they had been swept in a split second.

I had thought of all the experiences yet to be lived in the next four or six years at UC Merced and felt overwhelmed with how I would become my own person. My heart slowly pounded as I reminisced at the different points in high school where I felt bored to eternity, where I had thought of the next move, the next years and what they would bring. The small relationships that had been formed in and out of the classroom and those that had thrived 'till that day. The moments that made my friends my best friends and the moments I had realized what I was passionate about. The hobbies, like graphic design or photography, that stuck by me more than my friends did at times. The moments I felt I was ready to move on from the seemingly childish behavior into such a welcoming environment when it came to dealing with the new freshman class year after year. I had made a conscious effort to promise myself some of these memories, although meaningless, would remain with me in my next chapter.

What motivated me to look forward to college was knowing that all these little things were soon-to-be a thing of the past. I would be passionate of new things, of different people; I would grow bothered of other people and I would learn to cope with it because that's how adults work, right?

While we all contemplated the moment we'd throw our caps in the air, I gazed into the distance pondering my sister's graduation held just a week prior for her Master's degree. I belittled the present as I exhausted my mind with thoughts of the long days and nights she'd spent in college and how I would do the same. It would be completely different, or so I thought. I left those thoughts alone and concluded that the answer would come.

Graduation eventually commenced and ended in a split second. I had waved goodbye to those I'd miss and expressed affection to those I'd need by my side in months to come. From the college counselor

that convinced my peers and I that college wasn't so terrifying after all to the photography teacher that taught me to live intensely, whether it'd be by myself or with those I love, their legacies were a part of me, and I was grateful for them. I left the college campus where the high school graduation was oddly set with thoughts of disbelief, of sorrow, or I dare say, of solitude. What mattered the most was that I was at peace with myself.

As I rode in my mother's car on my way home, I had experienced the sudden transition from being an ordinary high schooler to an aspiring college student at one of California's most prestigious institutions. Still, I felt I would regret leaving high school behind; there was a notch. I came to the conclusion that time didn't care back then, and surely it wouldn't care now, or ever. Time was but a split second. As I anticipate university commencement over the next two years, every moment of learning, affection, love will be nothing, but a split second.