

# Before and After

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Sometimes I cry. Sometimes I feel like a blank canvas, and I have no ideas on what to fill it up with. And it's all because of the two words you work so hard to get to, until you realize it will all come barreling back at you. Middle school. There's no social problems for me, and my grades are fine, but it's the memories that come flooding back at full speed. I had no idea these new shoes would be so hard to fill, and that they had so many responsibilities. And thanks to this new world, every once in a while, I sit on my bed and think about the times before I came to this school. It is so different here.

Before I came, I told stories of my dramatic, fun-filled life from the backseat of my mom's 5 seater, jet black car, where you could smell cookies, and hear the occasional whine for a toy or treat from my brothers. Now, when I get in the front seat of my mom's new and shiny 7-seater Suburban, and she asks "What did you do today?", I give the typical end-of-the-day answer. "Nothing. No, I really didn't, mom." Before, my name was beautiful and special to me, and when someone said it wrong, I laughed. My name sounded like a song, and now that song is out of tune.

In fifth grade, while crossing the street to dance, I could feel my mother's soft hand firmly gripping around my wrist, and could hear soft music coming from down the street. Now, I feel my dance bag slapping my waist, and can hear my friends laughing at a joke I made on what we felt was a short ride here. I now know how much I've changed, and that when they say "You've grown so much!" they aren't lying. And now, I don't think I can ever reach back to the times when I clutched my favorite stuffed animals, when we trooped out every Halloween with what we thought was the best costume of all, and when we were told we could be whatever we wanted to be no matter what.

Things are so different now, so complicated. I want to be whatever I want to be, but it's so hard when you can't stop tripping over the past. But sometimes the world is like a memory, slow and sad, drawing out farther and farther, and all you can do is cry. It's not ok to bring your anger on someone else, or to lean on someone to do everything for you, but it's ok to be sad. It's ok to remember.