Show and Tell

By: Caeline L.

It was 8AM on a Monday and Suzy jumped out of bed and got ready for school. At 8:20 Suzy was bursting with excitement for show and tell that day. Light up shoes danced in hallways; toys already being shown student to student. 11:07 and it's lunch. Excited squeals and screams shouted across the cafeteria. 1:02 and Suzy and other kids enter their second-grade classrooms for show and tell after recess. Suzy opened her tin lunchbox to show Puddles, her plushy. The clock ticked loud enough to be annoying, yet quiet enough to be ignored. 1:10 a loud bang was shot through the hallway. Puddles fell to the floor and squeals and screams were heard again, but this time they were less joyful. The sounds in the hallway changed and there was no more laughter or the sounds of squeaky sneakers.

Suzy's story will be on headlines and news reports but acknowledged shorter than a first grader's attention span. A lot can happen within the span of eight minutes without realizing it. School is supposed to be a safe place, but sometimes it's not guaranteed. But time does this cruel thing where it keeps going even when it shouldn't. Even the clock didn't know it was going to become nothing but a before and after. Just kept ticking like it always does. Loud but quiet in a way. Desks were pressed against the doors and little hands made for loving were pressed to little ears. With Puddles on the floor, he was now covered in darkness. That was once a child's innocence, And that's where Puddles will live until he's removed.

Eventually another kid will find that same purple stuffed animal on Suzy's classroom floor. Glue sticks left uncapped, crayons snapped in half by the little fingers of children filled with fear, one light up shoe blinking pink, and other's hearts shall sink. And somewhere a grandmother will stare at a receipt for shoes that we're supposed to light up hallways, not memorials. Poor Puddles had never made it to show and tell, just sealed in a plastic bag forever.

The next day a new class will sit on the same carpet where Puddles had fallen like nothing ever happened. The desks shall sit there, the bell shall still ring, and new classes will sit down while the same teachers move on. The school staff will add more drills to the schedule and lock the doors a little tighter next time. Soon enough children will learn how to hide before they learn how to write in cursive. And some will say this is normal. Just one more tragic moment after another we view in the news. And it's not normal for stuffed animals, like Puddles to outlive the child who loved them. How long does it take before we understand that time didn't fail poor Suzy. We did.