

## Chasing Rainbows: Class Day Serious Reflection

By Alec Zbornak

My first winter break at Yale I flew to Hawaii with my improv group on tour. And on the third day, as we were coming back from a great adventure to a roaring waterfall, we happened to stumble upon a rainbow.

Immediately, we pulled over, got out of the car, and, as if on cue, all sprinted toward it. Cheering and jumping and throwing our fists up in the air, we ran after what felt like the perfect ending to the perfect day. But as we tried getting closer and closer, the rainbow just kept slipping further away from us.

Three winters have come and gone since that tour, but the memory feels especially relevant now. We all have spent four years running towards our beautiful Yale finales. Every 1am paper in Bass, every late-night grilled cheese in the buttery, every performance, every game, every test has been another step closer to our senior spring, a colorful time that's supposed to be saturated with friends and parties and graduation.

Then came the pandemic, and a lot of things have changed about Yale: no more in-person classes, no Harvard-Yale, no Masquerade, no Spring Fling. And it's hard not to focus on all that's lost. It's hard not to feel like just when we were finally going to reach our rainbow, it slipped away.

But the more I think about it, the more I realize it's always been that way. Even before the pandemic, from the moment we first set foot on campus, there were always things that we wanted to do but couldn't.

In fact, there were whole boards filled with them. You can't go more than one hundred feet without meeting one of these giant, rectangular bulletin boards. Inside. Outside. Old Campus. Cross Campus. Even behind Toads! And every board is filled to the brim with a glistening array of flyers.

In our first year, my friends and I would stand in front of those boards forever, taking photos of all the things that we wanted to do.

Improvaganza  
Treasures from the Yale Film Archive  
Talk Like a Pirate Day  
Wilderness First Aid Course  
Learn to Curl!

It was a mosaic of opportunities. And just when we thought we'd done them all, someone would staple a fresh batch:

Civil Disobedience 101  
Yale Photo Society Fall Exhibition  
Perform with Yale Children's Theatre  
Conversation with Vice President Al Gore  
The Silliman Haunted House is Back!

Our photo libraries quickly turned into a technicolor patchwork of events and performances and club meetings. But we quickly realized that we just couldn't do them all.

And even in the pandemic, even with all of the things that have changed, there are still so many things that we simply can't do here; things that we want to do; things that we wish we had time to do; but, things that we can't do. The virtual performance of our friend's one-man play interferes with the Ezra Stiles hike to East Rock. The YSO concert with the CCAM Virtual Reality workshop. The IM spike ball tournament with the Fall Foliage tour. Do we want free cannolis in the courtyard or free chicken nuggets on Cross Campus? Do I attend the digital college tea with the creator of Avatar the Last Airbender or with the Nobel Laureate? There are *still* just so many things to do, people to meet, and friendships to solidify.

I think about that rainbow in Hawaii a lot, though. There's just something so Yale about it. From the time that we were wide-eyed first years, we've been chasing the perfect college experience, where we do everything and take advantage of every opportunity that Yale has to offer. Where by our senior springs, we could be editor-in-chief of the YDN, president of the YCC, first chair of the YSO, quarterback of the football team with four Ivy League Championship rings on our fingers and a diploma reading Ultra Mega Summa Cum Laude in our hands. Where we've gone on every study abroad fellowship, watched and performed in every show, and become best friends with everyone. Where we've checked off every flyer from the bulletin board.

But that's impossible. It's impossible to catch the rainbow.

But if we've learned anything from this year, it's that Yale isn't about actually catching the rainbow. It's about finally realizing, even if it takes four years and maybe a pandemic, that you can never catch it and that that's okay. Yale's about discovering how you want to chase it. And it's about running and jumping and laughing with the people you love the entire way. Because it's lovely to chase rainbows, especially when the chase is as beautiful and vibrant and special as it was at Yale.