

At ten years old, I begged  
*Please! Mom PLEASE! I want a pair of Dr. Scholl's...*  
*just like everyone else! Everyone has them!*  
I finally got my red Dr. Scholls and they promptly  
blistered my feet and caused me to trip & fall

My brown bagged lunch  
sits in front of me in the teacher's room,  
reaching in I grab a vitamin water and my peanut butter sandwich.  
As I peel back the silvery foil I hear, *Did your husband make your lunch?*  
The foil rips and I smooth out the wrinkles,  
Avoiding eye contact, I say  
*That would be remarkable...but I don't have one.*  
The self deprecating laugh doesn't hide the pain,  
instead it shines a spotlight on it  
*I'm not like everyone else...*  
Another table, another day,  
another question *So do you have kids?*  
My breath catches as I imagine saying Yes.  
How I long to say yes...  
and to tell stories of my kids and their antics,  
to complain about no sleep and  
shake my head while admitting that it's all worth it...  
Instead, I say *No.*  
No.  
But it doesn't tell the whole story...  
The story of how I spent a year preparing to adopt a child  
The story of how I came within weeks of adopting a precious little boy  
or the pain of losing that child and coming away with nothing  
ending where I began

Everyone has stories  
And I used to want my stories  
to sound like just everyone else  
and to feel like just everyone else  
to be like just everyone else  
But now,  
I appreciate my story

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