

I Still Remember Her Smile

She was so beautiful. Her dirty blonde hair lit up every room she entered. Her blue and golden eyes glisten in the back of my mind; I can still see her crying. *I'm so sorry.* She repeated over and over. *I didn't mean for this to happen.* Her tears poured onto the black pavement. She tried to grab my hand, but she couldn't even move at all. All she could do was beg me not to let her go. But what she didn't realize was that she had already made that choice. She got into that car. She knew she wasn't ok to drive. She ignored my texts, my offers to pick her up, my pleading messages asking her to just *please drive safe.* Now, it just plays through my mind, endlessly.

She walked into the party at around 12:06 AM. I stayed home that night because I had work early the next morning. She texted me that she wouldn't drink very much at 12:28 AM. She wandered through the crowd of sweaty bodies until she finally found the kitchen. She danced and screamed out the wrong lyrics with her friends as she continued to drink. She had one too many drinks around 3:38 AM. Her parents realized she wasn't home just a few minutes later. Because of this, she left the party abruptly at 3:42 AM, despite my calls and my texts saying she shouldn't drive. At 3:44 AM she said that she was fine. At 3:47 AM she stopped responding to my texts.

When I arrived at the scene, my stomach twisted inside me. The oxygen was ripped from my lungs as I stepped out of the car. My eyes stung as my tears started to blur the red and blue lights surrounding what used to be your car. The police told me that you were driving 80 in a 50. They said you had drifted into the other lane, and when you saw a car speeding towards you, you spun the wheel in the other direction. You lost

control of the car and you drove off of the road. You slammed into a tree head on. You lost so much blood. Even if they had saved you, you never would have been able to move on your own again. Thinking about that made me miss you even more. You loved to dance; you loved to climb trees and laugh until your stomach ached. It made me sick, just thinking about how you would never do any of that again.

The funeral was on Monday. Your parents asked me to share something, but I couldn't get the words out. I let my mind wander during the service... I thought about how you'll never graduate. You'll never go to prom or hug your parents again. You'll never get married or go to college. We won't grow up together. Your little sister doesn't have anyone to look up to anymore, she's so confused. She doesn't understand why you left—I guess I don't either.

The flowers they ordered for the ceremony were blue and yellow—your favorite colors. I wish you could've seen them. I wish you didn't go. I wish you would've thought before you went to that party, before you decided to drink, before you got behind the wheel. In that moment you didn't realize how dangerous it was to drink and drive. You didn't realize how many people that decision would affect. You didn't realize you were going to tear my heart in two. I still remember your smile.