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Ms. Stein

English 12 P5

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Late Night Cruise

“See ya, Dave, have a good night!” I said, walking out of Ken’s Place Seafood, letting the screen door abruptly shut behind me. There were no lights in the back parking lot, only the slight illumination of the stars. My car and the owner’s are the only ones left. In my hands, I have my check from last week, a tray of deck boy fries (as we call it), and an orange soda; my usual Saturday night meal. My clothing is covered in the yellow-powdered breading mix, and I reek of seafood and garbage. It is later than I expected to be out, I promised my friends that I would hang out with them tonight, but I am tired. *Making food for nine and a half then closing the restaurant took a toll on my body. My shins ache, and my eyes are heavy.* Turning the key, hoping that my beater of a car finally turns over. With no time lost, I put it into reverse and drive off, putting my seat belt on.

I throw on the overhead light, putting the grey-cardboard tray on my lap so that I could eat my massive plate of crispy fries. My knees take up the majority of the steering responsibility. Cruising down the empty windy roads, one hand holding the orange soda and the other putting fries into my mouth. There was *no music* playing, so I set down my half-empty drink and grabbed my phone. It was a long ride home from work, I needed to listen to some of my favorite music— the classics from the 80s. The bluetooth was already set up. I look up, and there were no cars, looking down; I pressed the green icon for Spotify, then found my playlist. Looking up one

more time, only straight roads for the time being—easy. Immediately looking down again, scrolling for the song that was stuck in my head: Hall and Oates “You Make My Dreams Come True.” I feel my knees begin to lose the grip it had on the wheel, slowly drifting toward the two yellow lines. Shooting my eyes up, I grabbed the wheel coming back into my lane. *Luckily there were no other cars around.*

More than halfway home, driving with one hand on the bottom of the wheel. I had already finished my signature Ken’s Place meal. *Just me, the music, and my thoughts now.* The music begins to fade out, it’s softer than before, my eyes feel heavier. Taking longer blinks, the image of the road: the grey beaten-down pavement symmetrical with the yellow and white lines seeming further away, almost comforting. The warm air from the vents pointed anywhere but my face engulfs me, soothingly. *I have to fight the urge to fall asleep; I have to make it home.*

Fighting the heaviness of my eyelids, I force them wide open. Reaching down into the cup holder for my phone. I need something that will wake me up. My fingers type the password without looking, the phone opens, and I look down. Opening the app with the ghost icon: Snapchat. The red notifications of every one of my so-called “friends” waiting to be opened. The glare of the phone filling my eyes, *forgetting to look up.*

A few seconds went by, my eyes shot up and the two left tires were over the middle of the lines. Two headlights approaching fast, then zooming past me as a swerve back into my lane. Both hands shot up to the wheel, there was a sudden spike in everything. My body tightened up, my eyes were wide open. There was an increase in my blood pressure rapidly. I could feel the warm blood coarse throughout my body, waking every nerve alive, on edge. A slight sweat beaded up of my forehead. *Reliving what could have just happened in my mind again; what*

could have happened. My car crashing into a thousand bits and pieces, getting thrown around and spun by the forces of physics. The other person could be seriously injured, or dead. I could be dead, my parents could have gotten a call about their dead son, but instead, I was able to arrive home alive.