

Designated Driver

My heart races as a wave of crisp autumn air struggles to push through my broken windshield. *How long have I been here? Am I...Is my car upside down?* Only one headlight remains, nearly able to shine onto the cold, dewy grass. My head rushes over and over. *Lorali you have to wake up.* I think to myself. *Wake up now, C'mon this is just a dream, right?* Sweat then starts to drip from my face. Overthinking, I realize... and my heart sinks into my stomach. The backseats.... "Lila? K-Kayla?, are you- GUYS COME ON, ANSWER ME!!" I called out. My heart pounds out of my chest as I try to recall ever even having passengers in the car that night. They *were* there in my back seats, right?

A "*designated driver*" I was destined to be that night... until *I* chose to "party a little *too* hard." Why did *I* drink!?! *I* was supposed to be the driver. I am now unable to move from the tightened seatbelt against the rest of my body, as if I was glued to the seat. Sitting with myself, alone in the woods, a giant gust of wind then rushes by my car, blue and red flashing lights and sirens begin to surround the perimeter of my vehicle. The only words that come to mind are to scream: "I AM ALIVE!!".

Suddenly, cold hands grab onto my shoulders, shaking me, finally getting my eyes to open. "WAKE UP LORALI, WAKE UP" My mother yells, as she stands before my bed holding a trash can. "My GOD Lorali you were screaming!!" She pauses. "Was it... the dream again?" I roll onto my side, nauseated. "I haven't had a single drink since the accident mom... I- I miss them. *I* was bringing them home that night and *I* ruined it. Their lives mom, I- I killed them. TWO people, mom... SISTERS!". She sits down on my bed. "No, no Lorali you didn't-". She starts to tear up. "Y-You didn't mean to, Lorali". Her voice breaks into a sob. "The memorial of the tragedy... was that, today?" I respond under my tears. "I haven't had the dream in months. How could it be? My phone lights up on my side table,

showing both my mother and I the date. She then exclaims, “One whole year today since the accident, Lorali”. Our eyes meet...

... “One whole year... since I was the *designated driver*”.