

Luke Burns

## My Silverado

Drrrrrr, the bell rings as I take my seat in my period 3 AP Biology class. I take my binder and lab notebook out of my backpack, finding a fresh piece of lined paper to take notes on. Our teacher, Mr. Brown is not here today, a familiar substitute in his place. I can't seem to remember his name, maybe Mr. Tims or Mr. Wallace. With a smile he introduces himself as Mr. Tims, saying our work today is to take notes on a documentary about protein synthesis. Complaints fill the room, "We've been on this topic for so long!", "I should've stayed home.", and "When is lunch? I am starving."

Today feels different than most days. My arms are like lead, my mind is foggy, and I cannot understand a word of the documentary. The clock seems to taunt me as the second hand ticks by with a deafening rumble that echoes in my head.

"Huh?" My eyes jerk open from their dreams of school to the sight of oncoming trees and the noise of my truck sinking into the rough gravel shoulder. As I regain the truth of my circumstances, my truck tilts as the tire sinks. The further my tire sinks into the gravel, the more I try to countersteer. With all of my strength I pull the wheel back onto the road. In an instant the tires screech on the pavement, and I have no time to react as my Silverado, the truck I spent two summers saving up for, hurls itself into oncoming traffic.

*Four hours earlier...*

"Can you stay late tonight?" My boss asked.

"Sure, I've got nothing else planned." I replied.

It is easy to stay for the midnight close at this quiet convenient store. A Red Bull or some coffee would surely be enough to keep me going. The clock reached twelve as I sipped the last of the Red Bull out of its can. I clocked out, shut the lights off, and locked the door to the store. Hopping in my truck, I pushed the thoughts of sheep counting out of my mind, rolled the windows down, and put some Alan Jackson on loud. However, it was far from enough.

Sirens wail like a newborn left alone; their accompanying lights fill my vision. My arms look as if they were put through a meat grinder, but I am too shocked to scream. As I am loaded into an ambulance, I see the chaos on the corner of 114 and Spiller. A small sedan is almost unrecognizable, more scrap than car. Lying in the ditch, I can see the underside of my Silverado. Before the doors are closed I hear two police officers talking.

“It’s just not fair. On their way back from a family trip, what a shame.”

“Who’s going to raise their boy?”

“Hard to say.”

My world collapses. This is not possible. Could they really have died? I only wish I could rewind the clock. Before I fell asleep. Before I ruined my life. Before I ruined the lives of three others. But I cannot. I would never dare drive drunk, or even drink. I have never gone more than five miles per hour over the speed limit, and I do not text and drive. My driver’s license is clean, without any tickets. I thought I had done everything right. But now as I sit in this ambulance, silent tears streaming down my face, I know that it was foolish to drive tired. I now only wish they arrived alive.