

Jeff snored in the seat next to me. The map was splayed out over his lap. It was not close enough to read. I leaned over to glance at our route. Our turn was soon but I did not want to wake him— Colors suddenly blurred, blue to green, green to blue, blue to green, green-blue, blue—

My vision returned. I turned to my friend and asked, “Are you—” I was cut short by the jolt that went through me. My friend was no longer in the seat next to me. My heart didn’t drop. It disappeared altogether.

Through a blanket of silence I collected myself. The belt across my chest remained in place but I could not unlatch it. I might be able to reach a pocket knife in the glove compartment. As I fidgeted with the release, it freed itself. I pushed on my door and was halted again. The metal was twisted inward and not as forgiving as my seatbelt. I climbed to the passenger side and crawled through the void that was the side window.

I landed on the ground, disoriented. I tried to sprint but only stumbled. I screamed, “Jeff!” The road seemed to be in the wrong place. No, the road was in the right place. Maybe the car spun around as we flipped. I ran to the other side of the car. Against the sea of green-gray sagebrush, I spotted a bright white t-shirt. I ran toward the mound of dust and dirt and... blood. And this mound was motionless. I cried, as if on cue. I tapped my friend on his chest and stuttered his name, “Jeff, Je-Jeff, Jeff, J-Jeff.” I halted and breathed inward. “Please.” Jeff’s chest heaved. A siren broke through emptiness.

His inhaling failed as darkness overtook him.