

Section 1

Green. Green. Green.

Yel-

Yellow light. The ephemeral green light mounted on a dock across the water had dimmed, and I was left with eye floaters. From the corner of my eye I caught a glimpse of yellow, and what felt like safety was taken away in an instant.

Just moments ago, I was behind the pedestrian crosswalk when the light changed. Now in the dead center of the city's busiest intersection, an array of red headlights assailed me from left and right. Their wheels started turning. Their engine roars eclipsed the hums of mine.

I slammed the accelerator; inertia slammed my body into the seat.

That was the first time I drove through a yellow light.

I had always avoided going through yellow lights, but in that moment there was no hesitation. Novice drivers are reactionary: the moment they catch sight of a potential threat, they slam on the brakes. Although I was unaware at the time, when I slammed on the engine, I found a sense of confidence that erased any and all doubts. This confidence powered my newfound drive to take seemingly unimaginable risks.

Section 2

Walking onto the pool deck, my heavy footsteps could have dented steel; my heart was hollow like the ones at rollercoaster peaks, face was a glowing pink red. Jermaine ran over to me, face lit with concern and surprise. When he asked me why I was here, my eyes fell straight to the ground. Overwhelmed with nervousness from just stepping foot into the pool deck, I wasn't sure either. I had five swimming lessons as a kid, and tryouts were a week ago. I rapidly shifted my eyes from my friend to the pool door, but he grabbed my shoulder and pulled me back.

"Get in."

I fought my way through sprints, coughing and gasping for air the whole time. And I was hooked. After each practice, I gradually learned more about the team. Jermaine springed out of the water up to his thighs, Eric whipped balls into the back of the net, Sam and Harry swam faster than dolphins. When in a game and being pressed, knowing that my teammates would be there to receive a pass, or during drills, where they give pointers on my shooting and swimming form, by being supported by my talented teammates, I learned the game of water polo and importance of community.

At home, my business law homework suffered from highlighter happiness while five coding labs were overdue. This was the role of a part-time college student, a burden I carried with the seven high school classes I took during the day. Starting in freshman year, I fancied computer science,

but our high school classes were full. I discovered that I could take college classes, but initially shied away in fears of not being good enough. Most of all, I was afraid of being in an environment not meant for high schoolers. But I wouldn't let my curiosity be fettered by a capacity limitation, so I registered.

Stepping foot on campus, the aroma of freshly cut grass filled the air and lush oak trees lined the sides. I sat next to Jonn in business law class. He relieved my fears about college — he worked in outreach, so we strolled around campus while I learned about academic programs. Through our talks, I found my place at college.

Section 3

It turns out we are supposed to slow down for yellow lights, at least in California. Its the law, and as a good driver, I still do.

Whether swimming with Harry and Sam, practicing shooting with Eric, or jumping with Jermaine, taking risks has been the catalyst for building my friendships and bonds with people that have animated my life. I seek to conquer more yellow lights in my life, to step out of my comfort zone and meet new people — for it is now this thrill that drives me in my day to day life.