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Thoughts on: Driving

I never wanted to learn how to drive. In America, we give 15 year-olds easy access to a killing machine - "limited access", but really what can a mostly inattentive parent do from the other side of the brake in times of emergencies?

What is driving anyways, but commanding a metal box to go the same way you steer; some sort of contraption that takes us places and only hastens the space-time compression in which distances are shorter and time is more valuable because half of it is spent driving in the car, and you aren't allowed to check your phone which means EvErYoNe does it, and again - who gave teenagers this dangerous privilege that women's right activists in Saudi Arabia have been fighting for in decades-long battles?

I never wanted to drive. I was going to move to the city as soon as I got accepted to university; live in a tiny apartment with broken planter boxes filled to the brim with plastic succulents; develop excellent public transport skills; learn how to drive in a friend's borrowed car as our hair whips around to smack us in the mouth because how dare I drive so wildly and so atrociously; go back to mastering reading books on a moving bus; and eventually truly learn to drive after buying my first car at 45.

That was the plan. My independent, carefree life was ahead of me, and there was nothing to hold me back from the vague lifestyle from the shadowy corners of a distracted mind - in pieces, like the turquoise silicone pot handlers I dreamt of and the orange salt and pepper shakers that caught my eye in a garage sale.

In the fall of 2016, my mom was diagnosed with Graves' disease which is simple to deal with on its own, but combined with other health factors, took a huge toll on her constitution. She lost thirty pounds, her teeth became loose, and refused to leave the house except to go to doctor's visits and church.

Worst of all, her vision was impaired. She began seeing in double vision and never trusted herself to drive anywhere. With only my dad and I at home to support her, I learned to drive to ease her mind. Our household has always been centered around my mother's health despite the recent developments. We crept around quietly to ease her headaches, we brought meals to her bedroom when she was too tired to move. My father took her side in every

argument, forcing an unequal power struggle of parents vs. kids in which the former would always have the last word, but the latter would win with stoic solidarity.

Driving was just another thing I had to yield. Gone was the dream of learning to drive in a summer haze of sunflowers with friends at my side. Instead, I learned in the harshness of a cold spring, with my mother next to me (the radio off, because that headache never quite went away).