



ABC CLARION

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My Trip(s) to the DMV

by Angelina Li

I turned 17 recently. Do you know what that means? I can get my learner's permit! It took me three trips to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), but I finally got my permit!

Technically, you can get your learner's permit when you turn 16. But in order to do so, you would have to take 6 hours of driving lessons. Instead of spending money on lessons, I decided to wait an extra year.

The day after my birthday, I planned to arrive at the DMV when the doors opened so I would avoid the notorious long lines. Despite being awoken at 7:30 a.m. to go, I ended up going to the DMV at 11:30. I waited in line for an hour, but the line did not move at all! Literally! The place was going to close up in a half

hour and I was roughly 70 people away from the front door. I was told that I would not get in, so I left, having wasted an hour standing in line.

Three days later, my mom drove me to the DMV at 6:20 a.m. Since it was a weekday, I thought the line would be significantly shorter. But I was wrong. In fact, the line was actually longer this time. It stretched a 70 meters around the entrance. I didn't bother waiting in line.

For my third attempt, I was determined to succeed. Knowing that everyone would come on Saturday, I woke up early and arrived at the DMV ten minutes before it opened. But roughly a hundred people got there before I did. I ended up waiting in line for an hour again, in the rain and

cold, but it moved fairly fast.

Once I got into the building - finally!-I was directed to another line that looped around the hallway. Thirty minutes later, I got to the end of that line, and punched my phone number into the machine. Then, I was directed to go into another room.

Guess what I did in the other room? I waited in line again! For forty minutes, I waited for the last four digits of my phone number to be called. Finally, I went up and got my 6 point ID checked. Guess what happened next? You guessed it! I was put onto another line! This line was specifically for license renewal, registration, and permits.

Thirty minutes later, I was given a sheet of paper and directed to the testing room on the



other side of the building. There were only two people working in this room, so despite only having 7 people in front of me (I counted many times), it took an hour before it was my turn. I took the vision test and was sent back to the original room to get my decals.

Three and a half hours later, I walked out of the building with my learner's permit, examining

the long line of people waiting outside. Despite succeeding in my task, I lost all the excitement I had for getting my permit.

My dad eavesdropped that the lady who was first in line arrived at 6:30. I understand why now. Next time, I will wake up at the crack of dawn if I have to if that means I will be able to avoid standing in line for 3 and a half hours! ?

Guilt's Overthrow of Man's Innocence by Oscar Chen

The water shimmered in the moonlight as stars flickered brilliantly in the growing darkness. From the woods, a sharp crunch of leaves was followed by a series of grunts as a man emerged from the shadows. He dragged an enormous bag, bulky with its contents, on the shore near the lake. The quiet town on the far side of it near the mountains was serene, and all the lights within the houses were extinguished. The man trudged wearily towards the edge of the shore, stumbling occasionally on its rocky surface. He released the bulging bag from his grasp and collapsed on the rough pebbles, which irritated him quite a bit. He rolled over and sighed. The regrets of his actions arose and stabbed him in his heart. The lake, where he had played often as a young child, no longer had its appealing sense of joy and pleasant memories. Instead, the reflection of himself in the illuminated pond filled him with sorrow and emptiness, and he wept. His entire body trembled with melancholy as he remembered the days of fun he had experienced at the shore.

They served only as a haunting reminder of his numerous failures since then and the monster he had created from that innocent youth. His sobs echoed across his surroundings, and the silent response offered him no comfort for this damaged conscience.

The man continued his torrential release of his emotions, which he had suppressed ever since being denounced as a pariah in his community. He had no intention of returning, but the spirit of revenge he had possessed before vanished. His life would never be normal again. He just lay on the shore, listening to the gentle splash of waves against the rocks. He wondered about the wrong direction his life had turned. A nagging pain burst through his heart, squeezing relentlessly within him. He wanted to end his life, but fear crept back in an ambush and smacked him with the label of cowardice. He couldn't confront himself with the deed. The emotions from before evaporated, and his mind realized the futility of his own life. The lake still remained beside him, his only companion of the lonesome

night. As dark clouds obscured the beams from the moon, the glistening patches of light faded and the man stared at the sky, as the stars melted into oblivion. The frustration at these abrupt changes in circumstances gripped him menacingly and he screamed out, straining his vocal cords until they were sore.

The town was illuminated again, and he knew that his time was limited. Shouts erupted and rippled through the tense surface, as an angry mob gathered at the far end, seen only as small dots. Anxiously, he thrust the bag into the reflecting pool of gloom and twisted towards the forest in desperation. The explosion of water interrupted the lake's dreams as it awoke, absorbing the bag into its depths. The man only heard the splash as he plunged himself into the scramble of shrubbery. The water's pristine quality of the past was now tinged with the evidence of guilt and a lost life. The man couldn't bear to look back at the image, shrouded in darkness, forever ruined innocence.

Sisyphus

by Thomas Lynch

A creak underfoot, the snap of twigs. Chloe shuffles through the perpetual autumn, a sling on her back and the crunch of earth beneath her. The Woods stretch on in front of her, trees along a never-ending path. Silhouettes seem to dance around the edge of her vision, a million faces she's never seen. Maybe they were people from before the Woods, she considers. The more she tries to focus in though, they fade away, mirages of memories caught in a fall breeze. In retrospect, there are a lot of things she doesn't remember. It seems as if the farther she walks, the less she remembers. She brushes her arm through shrubs, silky leaves grazing pale skin. Time seems to speed up (or maybe slow down?), a blur of trees in slow motion as she walks on with no one but herself and the misty reflections of the past. And then, in the distance, alone figure stands, HE. HIS figure remains cut out like she remembers it. So much time has passed, but Chloe remembers HIM. She tries to run towards HIM but can't remember how, her legs pacing at that horrible speed

they've always gone. The Woods contort in her vision, soft oaks growing gnarly and shriveled, each branch a thistle from a dying shrub. HE stands motionless, as if trapped in time. She cries out, but has no voice. The woods have taken her memory of sound. The woods silently scream, knots in the bark howling in a mute unison. Chloe's vision is dizzy, the world spinning around her feet. An astronaut on the moon, she floats downward. Her perception of time speeds up, slows down. Years pass as her body slowly crashes, her eyes forgetting how to see. An echo resounds as her face hits soil, and everything fades to black. When she wakes up, she realizes she can hear herself scream. The world has returned to normal, and the Woods are empty. HE is gone. But she remembers now. The knife's cold memory imprinted in her palm, the noose's scratch against her neck. Chloe feels a seeping sense of horror as she stands alone, no faces to comfort her. Finally, she steps forward to walk the same walk for the thousandth time, a creak underfoot.

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