

Out of Place

by Anjali Nambiar

Out of Place Friday, April 12, 8:35 PM: *Tick tock tick tock*. She clung onto every sound of the clock as she lay on a bed with white sheets, in a white room, with the same white linoleum floor she remembered from every other check-up she had. But this time, things were different. She was not here to moan about gaining weight or to make sure her vision was on par like usual. There was a highway of pipes rushing in blood transfusions, the IV drip, and every other liquid possible as she mentally and physically walked the treacherous tightrope between life and death—without the safety cord. Her vision was too blurry to focus on the masked faces surrounding her, yet there was one thing she could clearly see. Death. Its pale arms were outstretched and welcoming her into eternal comfort within the darkness, yet she still resisted.

Friday, April 12, 7:47 PM: Everything went still. She was stuck beneath the weight of the crushed dashboard and fragmented glass. There were lights flashing, blood dripping, sirens wailing, crowds gathered, people calling, arms tugging, but what could she do? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. Every movement she attempted was futile with the weight of the world upon her. Was death to be her 25th birthday present?

Friday, April 12, 7:42 PM: The impact came harder than anything she had ever endured. The world went spinning and crashing around her endlessly in slow motion. She could not quite place where she was other than the fact that she was in the car and that she was going to die. Her death grip on the steering wheel only tightened with each second, turning her knuckles whiter than her blanking vision. Life was fleeting, memories were leaving, tears were streaming.

Friday, April 12, 7:41 PM: She hummed along with the generically cheery pop music. The day had been so unbelievably perfect that she could not believe it. She had just gotten a job offer on her birthday and all the sleepless nights of pursuing her dream had finally become worthwhile. But before she fully turned on the intersection, something did not seem right. Did I come the wrong way? Her head rotated towards the side window and now something really was wrong. She had the green light, she was supposed to be doing the right thing, she was following the rules, but somehow there was a truck facing her. She had looked for a full five seconds before she fully absorbed the magnitude of the situation she was in. At that moment, she had no name, she had no age, and she had no family. She was just another casualty in the uncertain battle of life that was completely out of place.