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excerpt from *the ten best days of my life*

KNOCKING ON HEAVEN'S DOOR

I died today, which is so weird. I honestly thought I was immortal.

It's not that I ever took fantastic care of myself. I did go to the gym three times a week (okay, two... okay, one or none on a lot of occasions). I ate well. I was very conscious of my figure (though I might have substituted Doritos for something more substantial more times than I should have). I kind of drank a lot on the weekends and sometimes on the weekdays (like last night and maybe the night before... I can't remember). I always got my full eight hours of sleep (with an Ambien). Still though, it never occurred to me that one day I'd actually die, be dead, not be alive anymore, ever. You know what I mean?

Anyway, none of that matters at all. If I knew how, and had accepted the fact that I was going to end up here, I could have smoked and drank and done all kinds of drugs. I would have gone to the gym or the doctor for yearly checkups. All that worrying about what I was doing with my life was pointless. All the complaining to my girlfriends about the direction my life was headed was pointless. All those times my parents sat me down and told me they were worried about where my life was heading was pointless. I should have slept with Steve (and without protection) before he dumped me instead of trying to look virginal and telling him that I never slept with someone until we've been dating for a month. On the other hand, I feel so content that I maxed out my credit cards on clothes and shoes and bags. I'm so thrilled that I never saved a cent for retirement.

So here's how I died.

The good news is that it wasn't a Mack truck that struck and killed me at four o'clock this morning, because I would never want to be an old joke. The bad, pathetic news is that it was a MINI Cooper. I can just hear my best friend, Penelope, laughing through her tears at the thought of my fat ass (which to be honest is not that fat, but you know how best friends are with each other) couldn't cushion the blow of a MINI Cooper.

In the end it was simple:

A red MINI Cooper hit me at about four in the morning as I was crossing Fairfax Boulevard in Los Angeles, with Peaches. Peaches is my miniature beagle. I normally don't walk Peaches at four in the morning, but that was when her bowel obstruction finally decided to clear. She was whimpering beside my bed for a good forty-five minutes before I finally got up to take her for the walk. I still feel bad about that. Peaches is such a good, sweet, wonderful dog. But you know that feeling when you're sleeping and nothing else in the world matters, even if your dog is holding it in despite a painful obstruction. Get up and take her out?

Obviously, I finally did take her out. I'm thrilled that I was tired enough to fall asleep in the clothes I was wearing the night before, my J Brand jeans and my favorite black, sexy cowl-necked sweater that drapes

over my left shoulder, instead of throwing on some old sweats and a dirty T-shirt (I'll get to the why of that later.) Anyway, Peaches died too, and she's here with me.

I feel awful about that too. Little Peaches didn't deserve to die just as she was getting some relief.

Isn't that weird that that's how it all went down? Can you imagine all the things you'd do differently if you knew that a MINI Cooper was going to take you out at twenty-nine years old, at four in the morning, while you were walking your dog? I keep thinking about that. People up here keep telling me that's the way life goes. Would I have done anything differently? Yeah, no, probably not. Maybe I wouldn't have been so nuts with my teeth. I really brushed and flossed a lot because my grandmother told me on her deathbed to take care of my teeth because dentures are a bitch. I might have seen all the sights I meant to see, like the pyramids or the Sistine Chapel or the Mona Lisa. I grew up in Philadelphia and I never saw that Liberty Bell. I should have stayed with my tenth-grade class when we went to New York City to see the Statue of Liberty, instead of running off to Bergdorf's with Penelope. I probably wouldn't have had all those "age defying" facials that cost \$90 a pop and the twice-a-year Botox shots. I definitely would not have been so adamant with the sunscreen.

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