

Vehicular Relationships (Riding in Cars with Boys) Sharon Murchie

The color chip I'm holding says Thai Teal, but I know this color well. It was the color of Jay Johnston's truck back in 1991. Jay was my boyfriend, my sophomore year of college. He was a long distance romance; he was very young, very goofy, and he had an enormous mullet. He had this S-10 that was so very early 90's...it was the color of this Thai Teal paint chip, but the official chevy color was "seafoam." He was so proud of that truck. It was the ugliest thing I had ever seen. Luckily I knew he wasn't gonna be my forever, so I wasn't gonna have to ride in that godawful seafoam truck forever...but for one Michigan summer, I uncomfortably rode in the passenger seat of a 1991 seafoam S-10.



My next boyfriend in the list of boyfriends had a station wagon that he'd bought for a dollar from his grandpa. It was a tan Ford LTD station wagon with the paneling down the sides. It was lovingly entitled "the love machine," but I promise you, (don't worry mom) love did not happen in the machine. The steering on that car was so loose that you could literally turn the steering wheel 45 degrees in either direction without the wheels moving. The ceiling was coming down and had been stapled back up

several times with a desk stapler. If you rode around with the windows down (which was necessary, because of the funky smell that may have been the car or perhaps the boyfriend) the ceiling cloth would flap around your ears and the staples would go flying haphazardly through the air. Riding in his car was like riding in his life.

Thinking about the historical boyfriends in my life through the lenses of their windshields is surprisingly telling. Perhaps, if I'm ever out on the dating circuit again, I should change my weeder question. Not, "what is your ACT score?" but instead, "what does life feel like from the passenger seat of your car?"

Mode: Discovery writing

Media: Doc

Audience: The audience started as just me, to write this funny paragraph about a college relationship and his horrible truck. As I wrote, however, I considered that I might read it aloud...so the SI cohort because the audience, with some people in mind more than others.

Purpose: To entertain and get a laugh at first; and then, to unpack this metaphor about riding in cars with boys.

Situation: It's complicated.

In all seriousness, the writing into the day prompt was inspired by paint chips. I saw the color, remembered Jay's truck, and then worked my way into a bit of a realization/metaphor about my relationships with boys and the cars they had driven. I used this piece as the edit piece with Ann's demo and realized that there was actually something in the piece worth editing, and worth keeping.