

Dear Drunk Driver,

My life was a rope, and every time something bad happened, a small fragment of that rope was cut. The time I broke my ankle falling out of the tree? A string of that rope was cut. When I experienced my first heartbreak? Another string was cut. And that's ok, because that's how it is for everyone. But you severed my rope completely, all for one more drink. I was going to be someone. The average life expectancy is 78 years. I only got to experience 17 of those years. 79%. 79% of my life I didn't get to experience. That 79% was supposed to contain my true love, my family, my children, my career, my ups and downs. But now that's gone. I wanted to be a doctor. I wanted to help people like you, injured in a crash, to recover. Now isn't it ironic that I'm the one sitting in a jar on the mantle and you're the one being taken care of by the people I wanted to be. I was a daughter, a sister, a friend, a niece, and granddaughter, a girlfriend. But not anymore, now I'm gone. Ashes. Like the ashes that were made in the fiery crash. My mom is lost. She doesn't know what to do without me and still hasn't accepted that I'm gone. Forever. That night, the night of the crash, I was coming home from a late night play practice I had at school, while you were on your way home from a night at the club. I was starring as Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*, but now Romeo has prematurely lost his Juliet, and the whole school is reminded of that when an announcement comes over the intercom. "The school's production of *Romeo and Juliet* has been called off and is being replaced with a ceremony in Zoe's memory" the voice says. Now all my friends have to deal with the reality excruciating of losing a friend, and the school has to have countless assemblies to remind students of the dangers of drinking and driving. All because of you. I had a full ride scholarship to medical school and was being recognized as a valedictorian as well as an outstanding athlete. "One more drink", you said, "one more drink." Your one more drink cost me my life. My future. My hopes. My dreams. My aspirations. The last time I saw my parents was the morning before the crash. I was running late, so I didn't get to say "goodbye" or "I love you" one last time. I simply yelled up the stairs, "I'm leaving", and Mom yelled "ok" back. Little did either of us know, that was the last interaction we would have. It shouldn't have been, but it was, and now she has to live with that, forever. Let me end with this, there's no way nobody ever taught you to not drink and drive, so what made you think that you were an exception? What made you believe that you wouldn't become part of the statistic that fateful night?

Sincerely,

The girl who's rope you severed.