

Gandy Dancer Archives

Volume 11 | Issue 1

Article 2

12-1-2022

Drive

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Recommended Citation

Maduro, Aimee (2022) "Drive," *Gandy Dancer Archives*: Vol. 11: Iss. 1, Article 2.
Available at: <https://knightscholar.geneseo.edu/gandy-dancer/vol11/iss1/2>

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Drive

After a summer of orange cones and helicoptered backroads, he could finally claim the highways as his own, wanting to tame the open road with an accomplice. On a sluggish Tuesday, the two of us bunched into his old navy sedan, our drive molded through moody teen anthems blaring from the speakers; our off-key harmonies threatened to drown out each guitar solo. Despite not visiting the elementary school since our finger-painting days, we deemed its parking lot an ideal location to watch the vibrant palette of light descend beyond the trees.

Parked beside faded sidewalk chalk, he joked about the cheesy coming-of-age movies, the climax where teenage heroes defeat their greatest threat by staring at the sky from station wagon hoods. Pulling each other from the front seat and atop the car's roof, our shoes bumped together in playful battle. The sky was a cliché blend of rainbows and cotton candy and all the majestic things poets can't translate into language.

Later, we couldn't recall who leaned in and initiated the kiss first, only a slow and clumsy moment of fumbling lips and hands caressing faces. The moment was quick to dissolve into humor and playground romps, tension fading with the daylight.

Moody music still echoed beside our laughter, the return home seemingly no different than the departure. But it was hard to know which direction was easier to look in: the heavy crescent and knowing winks in the sky, or the gentle hands beside me gripping the steering wheel.