

I drove down a street today that I frequented in my teenage years. I noticed the details of the road I would see when I drove around, singing to myself in the car. I can only remember the menial moments of my past day-to-day vaguely now, but I remember the act of *living* those moments. I remember the comfort of my car seats, the chill of my blasting AC, the contradictory warmth of the Florida sun on my skin. As I pass a curb, a dynamic mixture of memories emerges in my mind and I see myself driving my very first car and waiting for that green light. It's not one memory; it's the average of several hundred times that I waited for that light over the course of many years.

All this I see as I pass that curb in a moment, and then my past self is gone. They are lost to my memories once more, forever waiting for the light. I think about how many times I drove down this street, never knowing my future self would be watching during a quick weekend visit to a place that feels like home. Now that my future self is my present self, I wonder how many times my present self goes somewhere in the company of my future self without noticing. I picture different versions of me gazing at myself with care and compassion.

I smile as I imagine an approximated version of myself at 60. They are much older; hopefully they are still writing. I imagine them as a married woman, living with a beautiful wife in this tropical southern neighborhood of Miami. They wear skirts and sundresses and don't care about their weight. They wake up in the morning content with what they look like because they have made peace with being the best version of themselves that exists. They wear round-rimmed glasses and fine jewelry. They keep their hair short.

I look at a different curb now as the street races by and I see them standing there. It startles me, meeting their eyes. They're going on their afternoon walk — they enjoy the sun now that they're older. They see me driving past them all these years ago, back in their twenties when they were figuring out adulthood for the first time. I look like a child to them. The warmth of the beach pales next to their grin.

I give them a soft smile. For the first time, I'm aware of Future Anya watching me. Seeing me. They feel very real now that I can see them here with me. They give me a gentle wave.

I want to give them a hug. I want to ask them an infinity of questions. How did we do? Did we make it? How are we? Is it worth it? Does it get easier?

Unfortunately, there's no time. I have to go and live the memory they're watching. I have to do all the things that will lead to them seeing me. I need them to see me. I need to become them, so I need to exist now as I am.

I give them a quick wave back.