



THE

DO-OVER

Regret is a difficult word, ominous and fraught with myriad meanings. Yet, as we reach the midpoint of our lives, most of us have at least one decision we'd like to revisit. If you had to pick just one moment in your life, it would be...

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
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...TO *do* DANNY

HIS NAME WAS DANNY. He drove a silver Corvette and whenever I saw it turn the corner down my street in the small town where I grew up, my heart would beat like the wings of a trapped bird. The car was pure sex, with its long, sleek hood that rose into classic, curvy lines above the oversize front tires, and its seats that hung low to the ground, allowing the driver to feel the vibration of every ripple in the road.

Did I tell you that his name was Danny? That at six-foot-three, he towered over me? That he had red hair and an easy smile? That he was divorced? That I thought about him for years — decades even — after I left my hometown behind?

He is one of the few things I'd like to do over in my life. Over and over and over.

The problem was I was 17 and he was 34. A regular customer at the restaurant where I worked, he came in most days for coffee and pie after his shift. He asked me what music I listened to, and wanted to know who I thought would win the next election, and what did I think about beauty contests. He seemed to see some promise in me I didn't recognize in myself and encouraged my dream to become a writer.

He was attracted to me; the light touch on my hand when I passed him his cup of coffee said so.

The only time we were ever alone was when I once missed my bus and was walking the two-mile trek to high school — Danny picked me up in that car and took me out for coffee. Eventually he did ask me out, but fear held me back. Fear about what other people would think about the age difference. Fear about what I thought of the age difference.

He continued to mail me birthday cards with handwritten notes containing such phrases as "You are wiser than your years" and "You bring sunshine into my life." I've kept them to this day.

I found another man to love and I did become a writer. On a visit back home a few years ago, I ran into Danny after not seeing him for more than two decades. He looked rattled when he saw me. His hands seemed to tremble with nervousness. He was past 60 yet still had a hint of red in his hair. My heart beat like a bird flapping in my chest again. Despite our cursory chit-chat, I could feel an electric pulse pass between us that unnerved me. That night, I dreamt about him.

To this day, whenever I spot a silver Corvette, my heart still beats a little faster. — ANNE BOKMA

