

# Signs

Copyright Katy M. @awkwardchild on Twitter

Driving down the interstate in the middle of May, I have the map unfolded across the dashboard and you have frustration showing white in your knuckles.

“Goddamnit,” you say, “how many times have we been cut off today?”

I don’t answer because I’m searching the map hoping there’s a different exit we can take, because I don’t want to have to tell you we just missed the off ramp.

The next one isn’t for another half-hour in which the following things happen: you swear at other drivers six more times, I lose count of the words you throw at me, and we move a little bit closer to the sign that says ‘Couples Counselling: Turn right after your next argument’.

In June, you think I care more about “that oversized rodent” than I care about you.

In July, I give the dog away.

By August, I’m thinking that the dog was better company, and you just didn’t like the way he growled at you when you were angry and he thought I was in danger. I think the animal shelter’s sign was in the way of the one that said ‘The Point of No Return’ and I didn’t see it.

In September, you get a promotion and I quit my job. I’m on the road called Nowhere, and you’re on the path to Being Somebody.

“Things will be better now,” you promise me.

I find it hard to believe, home alone with only television and endless days.

It’s a quiet October day, and I don’t even get out of bed because there’s nothing to do.

Outside, they’ve begun construction, and I wonder if following the detour signs will give me a break from this.

November is bleak and grey and ‘Watch Your Step’.

For Christmas, we go to your parents’ house. Your father is disapproving, and your mother is offended by every second word I say. We barely get through dinner, and I watch you all scream at each other for dessert.

Driving home, the weather outside is nothing compared to the iciness inside the car, and everything I say just makes it worse so we don’t talk. We get home, we still don’t talk, but we go to bed. You call it making love, but we both know it isn’t.

As soon as you’re asleep I’m sick in the bathroom. My mouth tastes like vomit and Christmas turkey dinner.

The signs outside flash neon through the window and make the room glow orange as I curl up in a ball and try not to be sick again.

You find me lying in the same place the next morning, and you’re worried for once.

“Are you all right? My God, what happened? You ok?”

“I think I’m illiterate,” is the only answer I have.