

## Bumper Sticker Biography

### *My Dog is Smarter than Your Honor Student*

The thought of dog hair on our white couch would probably make my mother retch, so my sister and I knew better than to ask. In third grade, when seemingly every other 8-year-old got a puppy, I sang Spice Girls lyrics to my goldfish and tried not to cry when I came home one day and he was floating belly-up.

I locked myself in the bathroom and delivered a moving eulogy that I had spent forty minutes writing on Powerpuff Girl stationary. When my dad asked what was taking me so long in there, I told him I was having stomach problems and quickly flushed Goldie into fishie heaven. Daddy would have thought I was stupid for getting sentimental over an insignificant fish. He would have said something like, "All things die, kid. It's a way of life. Why don't you go do some homework?"

I moved out on my eighteenth birthday and the first thing I did was buy a sloppy St. Bernard. And I swear to God he loved me more than those two ever have.

### *Coexist*

The first time I went to church, I was six and I was wearing a dress with a lace collar that made my neck itch all the way through to my throat. It was Easter and my grandmother was in town so for three days we prayed before meals and I suddenly had a white leather book titled the New King James Bible for Children.

My middle school boyfriend was named Moses Goldstein. He spent three weeks trying to convince me that Jesus was just a prophet, and I told him I didn't really care who Jesus was or wasn't, I just wanted him to promise he was going to kiss me at Laura Miller's boy-girl birthday party because we were the only seventh grade couple that hadn't started making out yet. He broke up with me and I went through the rest of middle school unknissed and was pretty sure God created me solely for the rest of the world to laugh at.

My sister studied abroad in China during her junior year of college. She bought a lot of books on Buddhism and told me all about the Eight Fold Path. I knew I would never have enough *sila* and couldn't even manage to memorize the Four Noble Truths, but I let her keep talking while I daydreamed about being reincarnated as a squirrel.

### *Virginia is for Lovers*

We spent our first weekend alone together in Virginia, in a sickeningly sweet B&B that I pretended to hate and he told all the old people lies about his illustrious publishing career over dry muffins and pulpy orange juice.

We felt grown up and he told me he loved me and we pulled the scratchy, flowery comforter over our heads and he kissed me.

### *Mothers Against Drunk Driving*

I never had much of a taste for liquor or for motherhood so the irony wasn't lost on me when one led to the other.

### *Support Our Troops*

I'd gone on plenty of rants about the war, so I wasn't sure why this time he yelled at me to stop talking and stormed out of the room.

Imagine my surprise when he told me he was leaving for boot camp.

"It's the only way I can provide for this family," he said. "I don't want to leave you and the baby, but I don't see any other way. I'm 23 with no degree and we're running out of money."

### *Student Driver*

I slapped the yellow bumper sticker on the top of the back windshield and felt sorry that you had to drive this 1980-something rusting piece of crap. I would have bought you a Lexus or a private jet or a hovercraft if I could.

I always thought your daddy would teach you how to drive but you were only four when we got the phone call that he wasn't coming home. So I slid into the passenger seat and reminded you to check your mirrors and put the car in drive and wished the same thing I'd been wishing for the past sixteen years—that life be kind to you and that it'd be a safe, smooth ride.