

# Vienna Teng, Passage

I died in a car crash two days ago  
Was unrecognizable  
When they pulled me from the gears  
No one's fault, no one's bottle  
No one's teenage pride or throttle  
Our innocence is all the worse for fears  
The other walked away alive  
Arms wrapped now around his wife

My lover sits, the silent eye  
In a hurricane of warmth and word  
My mother trembles with the sobs  
Whose absence seems absurd  
My sister shouts to let her see  
Through the cloud of crowd surrounding me  
My colleagues call for silence in my name

I died in a car crash three months ago  
They burned me 'til I glowed  
And crumbled to a fine gray sand  
Now I am nothing, everywhere  
Several breaths of strangers' air  
And all thoughts ever written in my hand  
They plant my tree out in the yard  
It grows but takes the winter hard

My lover puts a knife to wrist  
Says tomorrow comes, hold on a while  
My mother tosses in the sheets  
And dreams me holding my own child  
My sister plays our homemade tapes  
Laughs as tears stream her face  
My office door now bears a different name

I died in a car crash four years ago  
My tree drinks melted snow  
Just eight feet tall a pale and fragile thing  
Bee stings, beaches, bright vacations  
Sunburnt high-school graduations  
A sparrow healing from a broken wing  
This year a glimpse of second chances  
Tiny apples on my tree's branches

My lover hears the open wind  
And crawls blinking into the sun  
My mother leafs through photographs  
And thinks, "Yes, she was a lovely one."  
My sister can't decide her truth  
Asks aloud what I might do  
In a conference hall my brief efforts engraved

I died in a car crash  
A lifetime ago it seems  
Been a decade or two or three  
They've just released a new design  
Bars and bags front and behind  
My fate now an impossibility  
Safely packaged hurtling down  
The highway hardly make a sound

My lover very much alive  
Arms wrapped now around his wife