I was six when my mother strapped a seatbelt on me and drove me down the road.

I was deranged and she wanted to know why.

The evidence: on the first Thursday of every month I banged my head against the granite

countertop and begged *mommymommygivemeanewbrain!!!*

She led me into a building. A hand-sanitizer headache.

I was six and a half. I thought nothing of it. I thought nothing of everything.

The witness: everyone in the first grade knew how to tie their shoes. The man upstairs didn’t make my hands work that way. They could tie their shoes, but I could tell you the capital of Washington is Olympia, and the fifth planet in our solar system is Jupiter.

Two doctors approached us in the waiting room. I saw them for what they were. They saw through me. I was six and one half and twenty-three days, thinking *what a drag*.But I thought nothing of

The factors: suspiciously green grass and overly smiley people.

I followed them down a hallway. My mother waved me a prayer.

The doctors showed me a picture and asked what I saw. I was six and one half and twenty-three days and four hours. It was just a picture. Within those walls, and outside them, too, everything was “just.”

On a laminated piece of paper was a boy in a tree. Saw in hand, he was in the process of cutting off the branch where he sat. And though I was six and one half and twenty-three days and five hours, I should’ve known what they wanted from me.

I didn’t know what they wanted from me. But I did know that

The giveaway: there were thirty-two divots on the saw and the boy had a racecar on his

shirt and all of the leaves on the tree were shaped like pentagons.

Files in hand, they walked out of the white-walled room.

I followed behind, counting the panels on the ceiling.

We turned a corner and the doctors pulled my mother aside.

They said I would buy her a beach house one day.