

# La Dolce Vita

Category: Accidents

written by Tatiana Rebecca Shrayner | July 25, 2025

While I was living in Florence, Italy, this past year, I didn't usually travel by foot or car. Instead, I drove an electric scooter. If you saw me on the scooter, you'd probably laugh—especially if you also observed two dumb American girls crash into each other in the middle of Piazza Della Libertà. Instead of making it home in one piece, I was laughed at by *nonne*, *cani*, and *bambini*.

When riding an electric scooter in Italy, you're supposed to wear a helmet and drive with the flow of traffic. Not only did I not wear a helmet, but I also drove against traffic. Going 20 miles an hour past the Duomo at 3:00 a.m. is unforgettable; the wind blows your hair, you smell the polluted air, you taste the humidity. After my friend Giulia and I drove into each other, I swore I would never again drive an electric scooter. But this story is not about electric scooters, it is about growing up.

When you are little, you want to try everything and be anyone. But when you grow up, you learn what the real world is like and how your actions can affect the rest of your life. And, yes, riding an electric scooter is fun, but what if I had gotten seriously hurt and not just bruised?

My mom is a primary care doctor and has lots of medical stories under her belt. One such story will always stay with me. One of her patients, an 18-year-old young man, son of a single immigrant mom from Haiti, had just received a full scholarship to Brandeis University. He would have been the first person in his family to go to college. One day, he dove into the shallow end of a swimming pool, hit his head on the bottom, and suffered a catastrophic brain injury. His family was devastated; he was just a boy who had his whole life ahead of him, and one mistake took it all away.

After crashing my scooter, I walked everywhere in Florence. I noticed the uneven cobblestones on the streets, the faces of the people I walked past—the greengrocer, the tailor, the tobacconist. I heard fellow Americans butcher their orders for cappuccinos or get fined by police for not paying the fare on the tram. I sat in Piazza San Marco and watched time go by. But mostly, I learned that life is nothing more—or less—than a gift.

*Tatiana Rebecca Shrayner*  
*Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts*