

## **GIVEN TIME, EVEN PISS MAKES RAINBOWS**

The pandemic got me into cycling. Not Lycra wearing, clip-in shoe, funny hat wearing behaviour but just riding to work as opposed to public transport.

I got a nice workhorse kind of steed with some of those useful but awkwardly useless pannier bags to carry tools. I soon got comfortable with the London streets and began settling into the rhythm of the daily journey. To work and home again. No detours. It was just business.

I started to notice patterns in my movements. I started developing a memory map of the little intricacies of the terrain. At certain corners, I would ride wide to avoid the pothole. I would speed up a couple extra hard pedals just before a downward slope to gather that little bit of momentum to roll further. I knew if I mounted the low edge of curbing at a certain point, I could gently and elegantly balance for a few metres, slip past a deep puddle and avoid a crosswalk that would always be stopping traffic with no one crossing it. If I went straight and moved over to the right, I could avoid getting killed by eager cabs turning left. When the green crosswalk light goes, I could zip over and up the sidewalk into the park, making sure to do a snaking double wiggle to avoid two bollards and a homeless man's legs coming out from his sleeping quarters. If I cycle extra fast up to that roundabout, just before the pedestrian railing, there is a low curb I can shoot up and cut the corner avoiding the turning cars at the roundabout and I can cross back in front of the cars and beat them down to the next roundabout, where I need to swerve off the road at the pedestrian crossing to cross the next road on the left so I'm not forced to enter into a collision with a car going straight. They never look there. Especially for cyclists.

It may sound like I'm riding irresponsibly, but I can assure you dear reader, it's all textbook midlife crisis, rekindling youth, yet trying desperately to avoid death kind of moves. I am certainly never in a hurry to get to the office and I don't do stupid shit to endanger anyone other than myself of course. Yes, cycling has its challenges. At times it can be fucking exhausting and after work most days, I can't imagine how on Earth I could find the energy needed to cycle the seven miles home. But remarkably, I get there. I just get on again. It's just like riding a bike. I do feel it has given me some youth back. A little teenage rebellion. Some 80s *BMX Bandits* flashbacks. (Insert inappropriate Nicole Kidman teenage crush anecdote)

There is a bridge close to home that is an uphill pedal. Usually, twenty pedals from the left turn out of a side street. Every morning on top of the bridge, I see an orange Tango bottle. It's generally in the same vicinity. It moves around dependent, I assume, on traffic and weather and maybe the occasional unobservant cyclist. Its contents are debatable. I think no longer orange Tango, but I am guessing urine. But this is just my personal local experience with piss-bombs. You start to notice them everywhere. For weeks into months, I watched this particular bottle catch the morning light. It slowly faded from a rich, almost Tango-like colour to a clear watery shiny, shimmery liquid. Just the other morning, as I rode the same path yet again, the perfect weather and lighting conditions cast upon the bottle to produce the most beautiful rainbow of light from the liquid within. For that few seconds, time stood still. That unique rainbow of hope will stay with me forever. A piss-Tango rainbow just for me. Sometimes the world delivers just what we need.

David Turley, 2021