

FIRST TIME OUT

(my wife tries out the recumbent)

by Adrienne Kinney

Me trying to ride your favorite contraption
and getting nowhere.

 So many false starts yet my legs,
Not comprehending they are to be engine,
cycle stop. Being stuck in PARK
 all I can do is laugh. This is like
riding a unicycle on a clothesline to the middle
On what seems to be a stretch-limo-chaise-lounge
 with wheelchair-backpack influence.

I try to maneuver this strutted and spoked appendage
sparingly made with that peculiar mix
 of precision and mad sciencty
only bare bones physics and love of motion
can produce. Slowly, precariously
 I get the hang of it -- first one foot
then the other, lurching ahead
like some wobble-gearred newborn
 only to pitch to a halt. And stall again

At last, feet-gears-frame move together smoothly round
Till path becomes ribbon between my legs
 I race the air, snapping twigs --- hope I keep going--
your cheers swallowed by air currents
in an ever-rushing symphony swelling, igniting
 gusts of leaves, sparkling country blacktop
fleeing meadows, pedals blurring
you move up beside me for moral support
 bless you!

So this is your freedom
On another level still, quite a thrill!
 No wonder you're addicted to tracing asphalt
through searing desert, thigh-crunching mountains,
anticipating easy-chair downhill with the wind in your teeth.
 What gear is this -- oops!
whoa there. Not so fast, says this Avatar newbie
Maybe I'll race you
 one of these days