

Ride

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My wife is disabled. My wife is disabled. My wife is disabled. My wife is disabled. No matter how many times I write this, it does not make it any more or less real. It will always be real, just as it must always not be unreal, surreal. We will wake up and say "Damn, that was a drag of a nightmare!" We will fix up our mountain bikes. I will fumble with the simple act of putting air in the tires, you will tease me. You will take far longer to get ready than anticipated. Then we will ride. I will find some deserted lot and begin jumping mounds. I will forget to warn you about one that might be a bit beyond your abilities, and you will fall. You will give me a dirty look, and blame me for my lack of foresight. Or, you will merely smile and proclaim: "Dirt hurt." We will laugh. I will wipe the blood off your elbow, bend down and kiss it, taste the remnants of blood and earth, and in a childish voice say "All better." We will ride and ride and ride. We will ride our way

out of our parental fears, daughters growing up too fast and not fast enough. We will ride our way out of a foreclosure, having lost fathers, a mother.

We will ride. We will spin so fast and so far we will forget about the nightmare. We will have been awake long enough that it will recede into the neurotransmital stew of our minds. We will have no memories of wheelchairs. We will forget that we have not slept through the night in over a year. We will develop a special amnesia targeting the realization of living like ancients in the middle of our lives.

And, I will forget that look. That look of pity and sadness, infused with syrupy admiration; what a good guy he must be, pushing his wife so tenderly around the parking lot! Oh, we will ride. My wife is disabled. We will ride. My wife is disabled. We will ride. It is winter, the wheelchair winks at me from the corner, sings to me songs in a language I will never learn.