



Scripts.com

# Life Cycles

By Derek Frankowski

Life is a river.  
That's what grandad  
always used to say.  
A beginning, an end,  
a million different ways in between.  
He used to metaphore my whole life,  
how it'd end and float,  
following the path of least resistance,  
barreling straight through the impossible.  
Clear as air and black as night.  
And no matter what direction  
or how it'd move or what it'd look like,  
the point according to grandad,  
was that the river always moved forward.  
What kept him running the rabbits  
until he was old and grey?  
The mystery of  
what lay around the bend.  
These days that mystery is hard to find.  
The river is distant  
and sky clouded with concrete.  
For many of us, life's great adventure,  
all its beauty, all its connection sails by unnoticed.  
Funny thing is the river's never that far off.  
This is the story of a way back in.  
To the rush of moving forward.  
Born from the earth's crust.  
Grown from the seeds of innovation.  
Forged in the fires of industry.  
The Earth's most efficient machine  
creates its most efficient animal...  
The bicycle,  
our noblest invention.  
Trails like the seasons come and go.  
Built on a foundation of diversity,  
beauty, classic elegance.  
Never quite repeating themselves.  
A marvel made of beginnings and endings,  
with a million different ways in between.  
Grandad was all about those connections.  
He had his hands in Earth  
as much as he did in machines.  
Maybe that's why  
he understood both sides...

Sure we till and cut,  
we reap and we sow...  
And yeah, we do great damage.  
But we're also capable of great good.  
After all, no matter how smart  
we think we are,  
we're just another part of the mystery.  
"Balance a bike right."  
"Keep the pedals turning."  
"Forget about everything except right now."  
"And there's no place you can't ride."  
That's what grandad used to say.  
I once read that life  
is an act of suicide.  
And it's true.  
We're probably the only creatures  
on the planet who know this.  
Maybe that's why we're  
so good at killing.  
"It's going to die anyway,  
might as well have it for ourselves."  
So we take, we take some more.  
But in the process we kill  
other less tangible entities.  
Things like flow, joy,  
interaction, purpose.  
Another way though the world is lost.  
Not by one particular person...  
but by instinct, survival,  
the very chaos of life itself.  
We spend hours thinking,  
designing, questioning.  
Also you can spend a few seconds  
lost in one moment.  
No time to think, just reaction.  
Focus.  
All the worry and the want  
washed away by the rush.  
When it comes to trance,  
when the builder puts down  
the shovel and picks up the bike,  
when creation overrides destruction...  
well, that's living.  
I still remember my first bike.

Perfect little banana seater with big chopper  
handlebars in sparkling blue paint.

Bright memories came  
on that miracle of ingenuity.  
Cruising down the sidewalk, feeling big,  
even though I was only seven.

In a second the world grew exponentially.

We found secret back alleys,  
jumps a whole four blocks away.

We'd crash,  
get giant scrapes down our arms,  
race to the corner store  
as fast as we could,  
candy spilling out of our pockets  
like stolen gold.

With every ride, every new adventure  
the chrome would fade.

The rust would creep into the paint.  
Other kids would show up with newer bikes.

My best friend Jimmy got a BMX  
with treaded tires, no fenders.

He could jump that thing  
like nobody's business.

Then we found a trail  
and the world changed again.

We'd find ourselves deep in the forest,  
riding off the routes,  
dropping into gullies,  
caught in the rain.

New kids would show up  
with gears and bigger wheels  
and while I remained true to my ride,  
much like the chrome in the paint  
my affections began to fade.

My parents promised me a BMX  
when I got little bigger.

But for now a chopper would have to do.  
One day far gone in the woods my perfect  
little banana seater broke in two.

The end of an age.

I cried for a long time.

Even though a new bike wasn't far off.

This thing had become a part of me.

It still is.

No matter how well we build things,  
no matter how hard we love them,  
like everything else for whatever reason,  
there are forces that aim to take it all away.  
It's only taken two hundred years  
for trial and error to get here.  
Two hundred years  
of innovation and invention,  
of not giving up.  
Complex by design,  
simple by nature.  
The bike is nothing more  
than circles turning circles.  
It's the human motor  
that makes it elegant.  
But no matter how far  
the bike has come,  
no matter how much it can already do,  
the pushing doesn't stop.  
We still haven't found the edge.  
One day the river meets the sea  
and then it's not a river anymore.  
Its passed through  
the wheels of change.  
In and out of experience.  
Stories, adventure, grandads.  
Inevitably the ride stops.  
Lost but not entirely gone.  
For now as far as we can tell,  
the cycle of life...  
well, it never ends.