



PHOTOGRAPHY BY TRASK BEDORTHA

Kickin' It Down the Road

The alternative to alternative transport BY SARAH DECKER

I'm not sure at what point I became a nervous person. I can trace it back to certain events that broke my confidence over time. One such event occurred when I was 8. I won't bore you with details, but let's just say I took the hill next to my house on my bike at an ill-advised speed. This resulted in my face getting an introduction to the pavement — and the two did not get along.

I continued to ride a bike, but as time went on I found myself increasingly frazzled on city streets, until finally I gave up and handed over my bicycle to my brother, deeming it unimaginable for commuting.

But let's face it: In times like these, with gas prices high and in a town with alternative commuting an important part of our social obligation, I couldn't in good conscience continue to drive every day. The sun is out, the sidewalks are dry (sort of) and I really do want to do my part.

I've always been partial to walking. Until recently I favored walking to work over driving, but I'm not exactly built for speed. My people are of a roving-the-plains variety, built sturdy, low to the ground, much like a Weeble. So getting from place to place in a reasonable amount of time became a bit of a joke.

Then I found my solution: a kick scooter.

As a grown woman, I had to eliminate from the running such vehicles as the Razor scooter. Sure, a Razor works and can be a quite effective way of traveling from point A to point B, but I needed something more. I live in a hill-infested part of town. A little speed, one wayward rock under the rollerblade-like wheels of the Razor and I'd be reintroducing my face to the pavement and, as you'll recall, it didn't go so well the last time.

Internet searches turned up many a promising solution, the foremost being a scooter developed in large part for the training of sled dogs. For all intents and purposes, it is

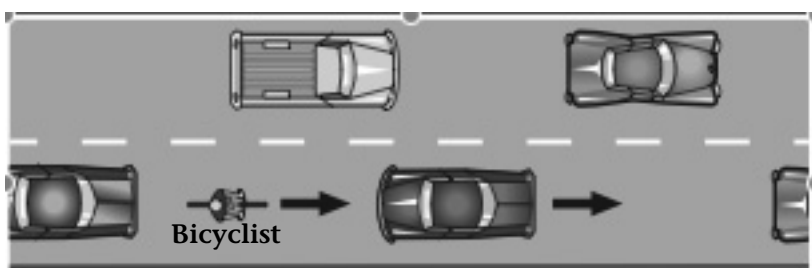
identical to its young cousin the Razor. This fine vehicle, however, has the tires of a small bicycle and, much to my delight, hand brakes. The bracket and harness, which attach to the side, are easily removable for a dog-free ride.

The last hurdle in this endeavor became the price. These beauties aren't exactly inexpensive, and though I might present myself differently in various circles, I'm not so great with a blowtorch, so building my own was a far cry from reality. Enter Craigslist. In a move that I can only identify as fate, I found a gentleman in Portland who was looking to off-load one. He had bought it for his children and, much to my luck, he wasn't exactly sure what it was for. The kids outgrew it, he wanted the garage space back and, on a rather perfectly timed day trip to the big city, I swung by to take it off his hands.

The first few spins on the scooter weren't free of harrowing moments. Balance is something that comes with time, and confidence will certainly need building. The idea that I can hop off with ease at any time helps me to relax. The ride is smooth and, on enough of a down-slope, it's much like traveling on your own moving sidewalk.

So now I can make my commute petrol-free: the wind in my (helmet-covered) hair, the sun on my face and the comfort of knowing that I'm not precariously perched on a vehicle as frightening as a bicycle. **EW**

Take the lane!



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