by Derek Morrison

Mind of driver
Place to be
Mental toolkit
Survival key.

Don't perceive
Road like you
Insulated box
Sans environment cue.

Street metal
Raise no alarm
Holes and bumps
Cause no harm.

Thorn and gravel
Or scattered mire
Zero influence
Low profile tyre.

Don't understand
Why you weave
So much road
Perceive you thieve.

Many cyclists
Driver be
Many drivers
Want cycle free.

[To listen to this verse select below]

http://www.cyberstanza.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Perspectives.mp3

Commentary

The theme of this rhyme is the different view of the world the car, bus, lorry driver can have in comparison to the cyclist. In the ‘insulated box’ the environmental cues that any road cyclist has to read constantly to avoid injury (or worse) are progressively being engineered out; that, after all, is what provides a better driver and passenger experience. That, however, is what also increases the risk for other road users not sharing such an experience. The cyclist’s world is one of identifying and responding to potential hazards that may not even figure in the consciousness of that bus, lorry or car driver behind – or in front – of you.

In London the large number of construction vehicle-cycle incidents has prompted ’empathy’ training where some of the rather cynical participants were required to cycle the streets just so they could begin to grasp what it’s like to leave their insulated box (see Cycling Facts & Figures 2, Veloscience, 18 January 2014). The intended ‘takeaway’ from the poem is that visualising a vehicle driver’s potential perspective of the road you are riding along makes for good defensive cycling and helps mentally prepare you for action when they do unexpected things. Psychology gives this the fancy name of cognitive rehearsal. It’s why some people can seem to react so effectively and efficiently whereas others appear to make themselves targets.