

by Derek Morrison



Frédéric\_de\_Civry  
track cyclist,  
pre-1893.

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*Walking on the street you're just another ageing girl or guy  
But when you put on the gear and goggles you can show them how to fly  
You can sure push those cranks up those endless hills  
And you can last all day ... despite your many pills.*

*It's OK that there are people now faster than you  
Their turn awaits as time always exacts its due  
Because what you have relearned is that it's the journey that matters  
Not transient demonstrations of prowess, the applause, and the flatters.*

*It's also worth considering, how well you compare  
To the average static person who just wouldn't dare  
Embark on some of your journeys, they would consider mad  
As they slurp yet another soda, no insight there, that's sad.*

*So on the street be just another ageing girl or guy  
Because your greatest asset is your willingness to try  
To keep pushing those cranks up life's endless hill  
For each day you ride, to want to feel that thrill.*

[To listen to this verse select below]

<http://www.cyberstanza.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Adaptation.mp3>

## Commentary

When I joined my local cycling club it came very obvious to me that there were some remarkably fit veterans around who could sustain levels of activity and stamina that would put many people decades younger to shame. While overall speed capabilities may decline with age, throttling back work output to maximise stamina seems to be an effective strategy for prolonging the participation in, and enjoyment of, cycling activities. To me, however, the key to successful adaptation is not just a physical one; it comes from mentally accepting what biology dictates one can, or should, now do instead of struggling to achieve what one used to do, i.e. relearning to enjoying the journey more than how quickly the destination is reached.

See also the poem [Extremist](#) (VeloScience, 25 February 2015)