

# Meet matador in the dark against tin bull

**S**OMETIMES, only a walk can knock a bit of sense into you. So, the other evening, addled to the hilt with the woes of the world, I took to a country road — for a bit of free rustic therapy. The day had faded into stewy winter darkness. But I was dressed for it. Ready I was, for any eventuality a track boasting a chubby grass mohawk could throw up.

The occasional cars heralded themselves from well away in the distance. The bobbing head lamps seeming to nod in respect to the untrimmed and formidable verges; gingerly finding their way as if navigating the garden of a stranger's house. And with each passing, I stepped onto the margin, and saluted.

Everything was going just fine until I heard 'that' engine. You know, the one that's being pummelled by overly enthusiastic gear changing. Like a child playing with a food blender's settings. Swinging onto the straight where I stood, its jerky shifting signalled nothing but trouble.

Alone, in a high visibility jacket, which had lost its lustre with one too many visits to the laundry basket, and holding a cheap LED keyring light, I was facing down a whirring, gunning machine. With both feet on the road's hairy scutch island, my inner voice told me "stay put" to flag my presence, while the rest of me hollered — "move!"

But I'd become a proud pedestrian matador waiting to outwit his tin bull. Maybe, it was one of those fed-up moments, when your mind makes a stand and your body morphs into a spectator. "Stand into a gulley to let this maniac get his thrills?" I said to myself. "I don't think so!" Seconds later, I jelly-legged it a couple of paces to the right, waving my blinking LED stub like I was on fire. And with that, and only a stone's throw of road between us, my assailing motor seemed to slow. Taking another crab step to safety, the last of my calm evaporated



**David Young**

## The Last Word

with the ching-ching of gears and the realisation I was about to become roadkill. Still my brain drummed — "lob the mini lamp" — but my hand refused as my newfound nemesis bore down.

"92 KY ..." I read the plate aloud. As gravel crunched beneath its balding tyres (c'mon, I can assume at this point), and the front bumper swooped across the camber, brushing the ditch I was landing in, I fumed: "Mown down by a bloody Starlet. Jesus!"

Lying in my briary bed, I hollered: "That's it! I'm getting me a Bull McCabe walking staff. And taping it up good-oh for whipping off wing mirrors." But by the time, I'd made the remaining half mile jaunt home, my angry action man persona had passed into the night. Instead of fashioning weaponry, there's now a permanent note on the fridge. "Get a bigger flashlight."

Just one of those days when a good falling down is no bad thing.

