

*Clementine*

I would've been late without her. Not that it really would've mattered, as after all, I'm really not the most punctual fellow. But oh, there she was, my steed, my clementine chariot. These smaller lads, I find, are far superior to oranges. More agile perhaps as well., While their construction may be more fragile, their oily incandescence outshines that of their larger counterpart. Personal preference. I rarely purchase either. So, anyways, I had her locked onto a hunk of metal. A designated one, to save her another trip to the campus impound. Because, as I've said before, *It all matters so much when I get on my orange bicycle.*<sup>1</sup>

It takes me about two minutes to get to work. Four minutes from my house to class. Olive to Fifth. Fifth to Sixth Street, up over College, and hello, Wilson Hall. Granted, I'm sweating by the time I sit down in class, just in time to crank a few layers off and sink into my seat. Or try to. Then she's there as I exit, patiently waiting for me, ecstatic, to hear the hiss of her back tire skid over stained concrete, weaving in and out of this, and away from that. She takes me around by the hands, bolstering my resolve to continue my alleged voluntary participation in this conundrum of a world. Pacified by an orange piece of metal, or clementine, excuse me. I am granted momentary relief from the incessant jitter, allowing a conscious interaction between myself and my surroundings. I've fallen in love with the idea that if something is blurry, it has the opportunity to become perfect, as the edges are not defined. I mean, of course that was the whole point, was it not? To reside within the inbetween. The satisfaction that stems from knowing I could be going somewhere, yet most of the time I had already arrived at where I needed

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It all matters so much when I get on my orange bicycle  
I fly down the hill, reaching out for myself. I must be amongst the leaves.  
I'm so close. So close to convincing the world I'm still here.  
Then just when I'm about to find the embrace, I've arrived.  
I say goodbye as I dismount. I'll find myself next time.

to be. That was what did it for me. I was really there. How is it that being so close to falling makes you fly so much faster that you can't go back to before? Back to walking? Why is it that I can't matter everywhere?

She just let me be. It's important to note that entering this state is not necessarily seasonal. (for best results, see mid-September (depends on region)). So, I crank her up above my chest, hoisting blindly in my garage of gloom, and put her to bed amongst the rafters.

It's January in Montana. It was 54 degrees Fahrenheit yesterday. There is no snow on the roads. They sit clear of snow, salted by only gravel. And in the oddest of fashions, I've been somewhat okay with it. I've never felt this way before. To be fair, she wasn't mine at this time last year. But all because of her, now I can ski the streets.

Right foot, left pedal, torso oriented on the left of her frame. Ass meets seat. Right foot lifts, left foot takes its place. Right leg swings back, up over the seat and back tire, finally descending onto the right pedal. Mounted. Stroke, stroke. Regain posture, remove hands from bar, earbuds in, sunglasses donned. And when you see me from afar, swaying and dipping on my citrus cycle, you're thinking one of two things. It's either, *fuck, he looks alive*, or what an ass, he *should slow down*. And in both cases, you'd be right. And so I glide, neither here nor there, dappled with the beauty of that which could never survive as stationary.