

And, Clancy, you must catch them, and catch them early on.
Ride boldly, lad, and never fear the spills,
For never yet was rider that could pass the peloton,
If they're in front when they come down the hills.'
So Clancy rode to catch them – he was bent over the bars
And his feet flew round the cranks like bloody hell,
As he led the group of chasers – overtaking several cars
With the jolly sounds of tinkling from his bell.

But fast the town boys pedalled up the Coogee Bay Road slope
Where the eager watchers gathered on each side
And the old man muttered fiercely 'We haven't got a hope:
No man can catch them down the other side.'
On the Carrington Road summit, even Clancy took a pull,
It well might make the boldest whisper 'Jeez',
The slope was one in four and the bitumen was full
Of pot holes: you could slip and skin your knees.

But the man from Snowy River let the one-speed just freewheel,
And he turned his head around and gave a cheer,
And he passed some of the town boys as their brakes began to squeal,
While the bystanders looked on in very fear.
He sent the gravel flying, but the bicycle was sweet,
The potholes hardly bounced his rapid glide,
And The Man from Snowy River never shifted in his seat –
It was grand to see that mountain biker ride.

Through the red lights and the stop signs and the parked cars all around
Down the hillside at a tearing pace he went;
And he never pedaled backwards till he landed safe and sound,
At the bottom of that terrible descent.
He was right among the townies as they climbed Clovelly Hill,
And the watchers back in Coogee standing mute,
Saw his pedals turning madly, he was right among them still,
As he raced along up Brook Street in pursuit.

Then they lost him for a moment, where two Coogee gullies met
Up in Randwick, but a final glimpse reveals
On a dim and distant hillside the town boys racing yet,
With The Man from Snowy River at their wheels.
And as the shadows lengthened, he passed the thinning pack
Just taking on one rider at a time
Till he pedaled down the bay road, with the sunset at his back
And with daylight second, crossed the finish line.

But his trusty ladies' step-through looked a bit the worse for wear
With a sagging saddle and a twisted chain,
With crooked rims and ruptured tires and bearings glowing hot
It looked as though she'd never ride again.
So among the cappuccinos in the café by the Bay,
Where the men in lycra tell their stories tall
The Man from Snowy River is a household word today –
And that's his bike, there, hanging on the wall.

SINGABOUT

OCTOBER 2015

UPDATING PATTERSON

Professor Joe Wolf from the University of New South Wales researches the physics of the voice and musical instruments. In his spare time he also composes music and has penned a couple of modern versions of Banjo Patterson's most famous poems.

The inspiration for the first of these came from hand-made signs seen near Wyee, NSW simply saying 'shearer' and giving a mobile phone number...

clancy@theoverflow

I had written him a text
Which I'd sent, hoping the next
Time he came in mobile coverage
He'd have time to say hello.
But I'd heard he'd lost his iPhone,
So I emailed him from my phone,
Just addressed, on spec, as follows:
clancy@theoverflow

And the answer – redirected –
Wasn't quite what I'd expected
And it wasn't from the shearing mate
Who'd answered once before.
His ISP provider wrote it
And verbatim I will quote it:
'This account has been suspended:
You won't hear from him no more.'

In my wild erratic fancy
Visions come to me of Clancy:
Out of reach of mobile coverage
Where the Western rivers flow.
Instead of tapping on the small screen,
He'd be camping by the tall green
River gums – a pleasure
That the town folk never know.

Well, the bush has friends to meet him
But the rest of us can't greet him:
Out there, even Telstra's network
Doesn't give you any bars.
He can't blog the vision splendid
Of the sunlit plains extended
Or tweet the wondrous glory
Of the everlasting stars.

I am sitting at the keyboard
And I'm too stressed out to be bored
As I answer all the emails
By the deadlines they contain
While my screen fills with promotions
For 'Vlaggra' and strange potions
And announcements of the million-dollar
Prizes I can claim.

But the looming deadlines haunt me
And their harrying senders taunt me
That they need response this evening
For tomorrow is too late!
But their texts, too quickly ended,
Often can't be comprehended
For their writers have no time to think –
They have no time to wait.

And I sometimes rather fancy
That I'd like to trade with Clancy:
Just set up an email bouncer
Saying 'Sorry, had to go.'
While he faced in an inbox jamming
Up with deadlines and with spamming
As he signed off every message:
clancy@theoverflow

Joe Wolf with apologies to Banjo Patterson.
Poems subject to [Creative Commons License](#)

The Mountain Biker from Snowy River

Joe Wolf with apologies to Banjo Patterson

There were ripples on the lattes for the rumour had been spread
That a cash prize had been offered for the ride
That they did each Sunday morning – a thousand dollars, it was said –
And a row of fancy bikes was parked outside.
All the tried and noted riders from the city and the East
Had gathered there for brunch at ten a.m.
For the locals like hard riding – if it's followed by a feast –
And the Coogee slopes are made for such as them.

There was Henderson who made his name when racing Malvern Stars
The old man with his lycra faded white
Yet few could ride beside him when he took the handlebars
He could go wherever you could take a bike.
And Clancy of the Overflow came down to try his luck
No finer rider 'ere put foot on pedal
He still finished up the time trial on the day his brakes got stuck
And he crossed the finish line on smoking metal.

And one was there, a stripling, on a step-through ladies' frame
A one-speed with a springy leather seat
With a brake that you backpedalled when the time for stopping came
And rubber pedals underneath the feet.
But the man looked tough and wiry – just the sort that won't say die –
As the fastest road race riders often are
And his bike was built to take whatever came down from on high
– In the wicker basket on the handlebar.

But the frame was old and rusty, one would doubt its power to stay,
And the old man said, 'That bike will never do
For a long and tiring road race – lad, you'd better stop away,
These hills are far too rough for such as you.'
So he waited sad and wistful – only Clancy stood his friend –
'I think we ought to let him come,' he said;
'I warrant he'll be with us when he's wanted at the end,
For both his bike and he are mountain bred.'

'He hails from Snowy River, up by Kosciusko's side,
Where the hills are twice as steep and twice as rough,
Where a mountain bike would fall apart on every second ride,
And the man that holds his own is good enough.'
So he went, but on the first ascent, the town boys formed a clump
They cranked away, and shifted down to low
And the old man gave his orders, 'Boys, go at them from the jump,
No use to try for fancy riding now.'