

# Waikato Journal of Education

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## UNTITLED

I'm on my bike.  
The 10-speed bike I bought my second year in high school with my summer earnings.  
I only use two gears  
like in grad school in Illinois I used only two of the 21 gears on my mountain bike.  
It was so flat there, it is flat here.

I have on my backpack.  
The one I bought in grad school.  
Suddenly, I cannot remember what kind of school bag I had in high school -  
it certainly was not a backpack.  
It was uncool.

I'm on the road that follows the shore of Pyhäjärvi.  
The road I used to bike to high school.  
When I meet my old teachers during my visits, they remember that I always biked instead  
of taking the bus  
although it was free.

The wind blows, as it always did.  
My baggy exercise clothes flap.  
Then, in high school, I wore skin tight Lee jeans  
under which my quadriceps struggled to find space to contract  
to meet the requirements of my increasing pedalling speed.  
I wrapped their bell bottoms with pegs.  
That was not uncool.

I am in no hurry - I'm exercising.  
Then, I was always late:  
for a 20 minute trip I always had only 15.  
One kilometer to go, a big clock at the jeweller's shop determined whether I made it -  
13 to nine and I was safe.

I remember,  
in our Finnish class once somebody wrote an essay on biking to school.  
Our teacher read it out loud:  
the panicked desperation, the odd images of time and markers that flashed through the  
writer's mind  
-"kaksi varista sähkölangoilla harmaa taivas taustanaan" -  
(two black crows on the electricity line against the grey sky)  
I remember my desperation: why couldn't I write like that.

Now, I'm still at school.  
Now I never bike.  
It's down under:  
city and mountains and cars speeding dangerously.  
Now I write -  
but still only poetry in English.

**Pirkko Markula**