

"Stop! For God's sake, stop! There's a dog in the road."

It wasn't a dog, but they didn't know that until the car was locked into a skid and on top of the crumpled heap of sheeting lying in the outer lane. After that there was no time for accurate identifications. The car spun twice before hitting the structure of the bridge and bouncing off into the central lane. The Belgian vehicle behind was itself going nearer sixty than forty.

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The police sergeant blew out his cheeks. Sustained compassion is an emotion sometimes found in short supply among motorway police patrols.

"Blithering bloody idiots," he said objectively.

The young constable had been on motorway patrol long enough to share his superior's familiarity with such scenes. He ran his eye along the crushed concertina of jagged metal that had lately been a cherished motor car in Ford's upper range.

"What you reckon's the length of one of these, Sarge?"

The sergeant shrugged. "Fifteen feet? Fifteen and a half?"

"Can't be more'n eight or ten now. Wouldn't believe it, would you?"

"If you caught a fully-loaded container lorry up your backside, son, you'd believe anything except it was your birthday." He sniffed. "Especially if it was driven by some push-on wog."

The young constable poked gingerly into the small space that had been the passenger seat area. The ambulance men had had to take Angie out in handy pieces. He fished something from between the crushed seat and the twisted metal that might have been the door frame. It was a blood-soaked dog collar.

"Funny," he said. "No sign of a dog in there."

The sergeant made a face.

"Must have been *someone's* birthday, then," he acknowledged.



## TIME FLIES

this is the bird's hour  
when fog merges land and sea  
and the sun's audience is lost  
to those who sleep

in the tranquil hours of dawn  
I watch these winged creatures  
from my perch upon the hill  
they flirt with waves of air  
and carry songs above  
the thunder of the city  
where sirens replace  
the urgency of the wind  
and bulldozers silence  
roaring rivers

I hold the vision that these friends  
will survive the wreckage  
when humans have flown too high  
and the birds' hour  
will be the only hour  
to witness the morning sky

Katherine Minott