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By Graham Vivian Lancaster

The Highveld storm had been threatening for a while, building and passing over and building again. High winds pushed up clouds of dust ahead of the gusts, knocking things over and whipping the trees to frenzied dances of impossible angles and showers of leaves. This of course, sent drivers into that kind of madness that befalls South Africans when the sun disappears during the day, causing total confused disillusion and they streak like mambas for the safety of their holes.

From the safety of the filling station where I was refuelling, I watched the carryings on at the busy intersection of panicked drivers disregarding the lights, screeching tyres, Hawaiian salutes and general bad manners as they moved into fight or flight mode.

When the storm did decide to let go it glanced over Rustenburg; fat drops of rain on a high wind slamming down and sending everyone running for cover.

It wasn't enough for any run off but there was obviously a lot more hiding up there.

I was one hundred kilometres from base on a road I was almost killed on some years back when the new road in the opposite direction was opened and someone took the old road in my direction. We almost met head on and had he not run through the construction demarcating cones that would have been it as I was overtaking an ore carrier and had nowhere to go.

So, mad as a cut snake he turned round and chased me. I saw him coming at a furious pace and stopped. Out he jumped full of furious bunched fists and as he ran up I pointed across the grass.

He looked and saw traffic travelling parallel in the opposite direction. He looked again and then at me as his face drained.

"The other road is open."

"Oh my....! Sorry ou!" He shook my hand and presumably pulled the medicinal brandy out from beneath his seat to calm himself as he continued along my direction of travel looking for a place to cross over.

I do not like this road. Driving and drivers are always bad and in a hurry along here.

As soon as the mini storm passed over I headed for Pretoria on the N4 and about twenty kilometres down the road the storm came back in all its vengeance.

With my foot flat on the accelerator the Bantam couldn't go faster than one hundred kilometres an hour into the head wind in places. The rain came, a silver blanket slamming into the truck and fortunately everyone slowed – because we could hardly see with all the rain and spray from the vehicles.

There was an ore carrier in front of me and when the rain cleared I pulled out to overtake. As I came alongside, the wind changed and a solid sheet of spray blanked out the ore carrier and the road ahead. Memories of another day flashed through my mind. I knew the oncoming lane was clear but someone behind me was also overtaking so I couldn't pull back. I watched the edge of the road, hoping the heavy truck driver was doing something similar. And then I was through.

Phew!

Then the rain came again, driven in sheets on the wind. There was a bridge ahead. There was a lay-by beneath the bridge on the other side of the crash barrier and I dashed in there, slipping and sliding in the mud, but the front wheel drive pulled the truck out of it onto harder ground.

Now that I was stopped, the full force of the wind could be felt as it buffeted and rocked the truck as I watched the rain flying past on the road, reflecting on Africa, which is an adventure at least twice every day.

Other drivers saw me in there and tried to stop but had missed the turn in and I could see myself camping the night as a massive pile up ensued. A lady in an Alpha Spyder stopped on the side of the road and I hooted and waved her off. She got the hint and took flight.

The rain stopped and I pulled out, only to drive into hail about three kilometres down the road. Pieces of ice flashed past the window like bullets on the wind, slamming into the windshield, glancing off the bodywork and I expected damage.

Anyway – everything turned out fine and I arrived safely. The wind was gusting in Pretoria and had loosened the tent pegs but everything was dry as I settled in my camp chair in the wind buffeted tent, with hot McDonalds coffee and three Shopright cinnamon sugar pancakes for a late lunch.

Life in Africa is different.

Bio:

South African Writers Circle Quill Award winning author and 2010 American Pushcart Poetry nominee, 2010 English Academy of Southern Africa poetry judge, 2011 English academy of Southern Africa Gold Medal proposal, he writes in ten genres from the many eclectic facets of his adventurous life. Widely published in anthologies, with thirty five published books of his own, his teenage adventure series and poetry are being taught in schools.

One of his poems was chosen to represent South Africa at the Dec 2010 World Poetry Festival in Canada.

Translated into Spanish, Romanian, Hindi and French, read on radio in Argentina and Puerto Rico. Published in *Fullosia Press*, *A Hudson View*, *Labyrinth*, *Convorbini Literare*, *Seventh Quarry Press*, *Nord Literar*, *Axiom*, *World Anthology Of Love Poetry*, *Crossroads Of The Century*, *Sailing Through The Mists Of Time*, *Across The Long Bridge*, *Journeys*, *Skyline*.