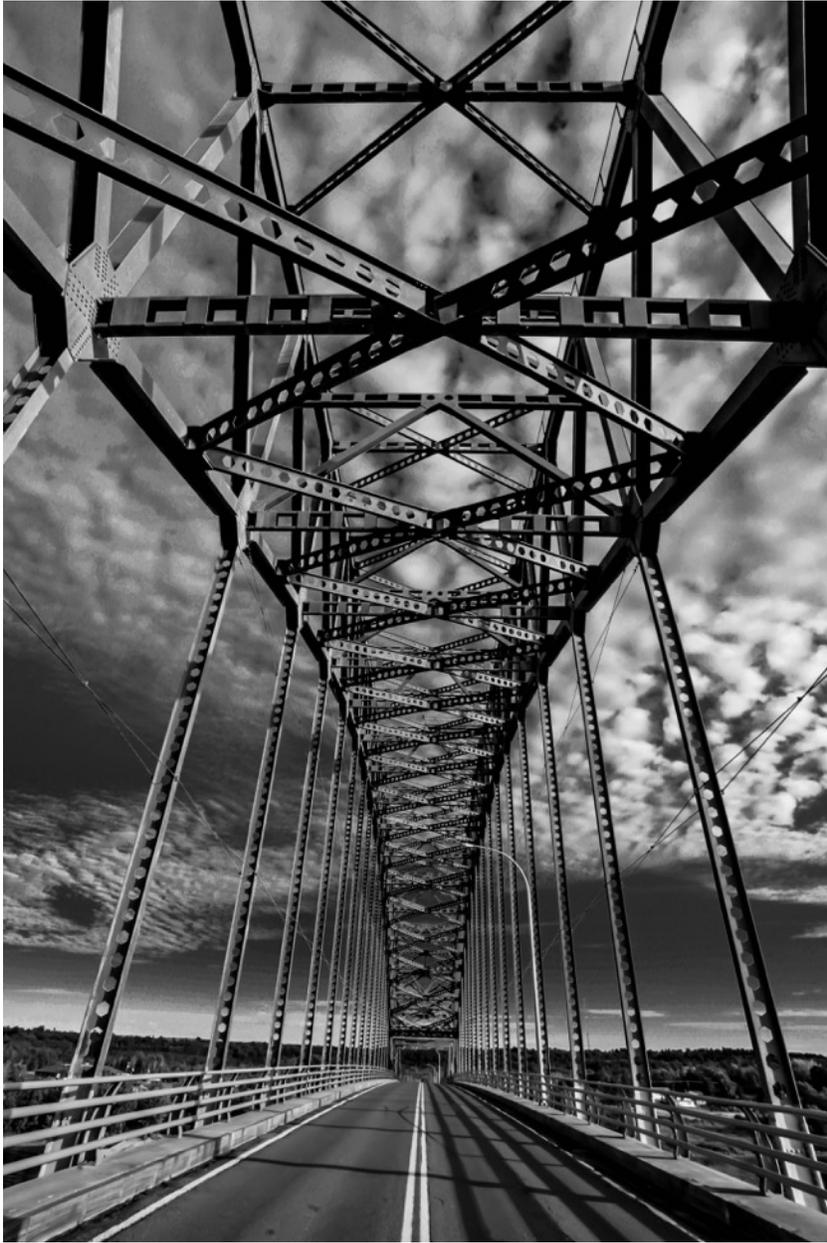


## The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 37: Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper, in which the two swim against the current tide.

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“What’s that?” said Crazy Man to the dog, Sidestepper.

They’d been on the path of adventure and new meanings for what seemed like millennia...or a few minutes, depending on your individual placement in quantum reality.

With his beady little doggy eyes that looked more like a couple of polka dots than something that interpreted light meaningfully, the dog, Sidestepper, followed Crazy Man’s pointed finger

which was sheathed in a clown glove (something that terrified Crazy Man) and he had to admit, what he was looking was mighty impressive. In fact, even with all the impressive things he and Crazy Man had seen on their journey, this was pretty damn cool.

It stretched into the sky for a couple of hundred feet and it was all geometry and structure. The dog, Sidestepper, imagined that it took a really smart person a lot of time to build something like this...maybe someone who played with Mechano kits when he or she was a kid.

This one's come a long way since Mechano sets.

"It's a bridge that leads into the big sky," said the dog, Sidestepper. Of course, his beady little polka dot doggie eyes were too small to see that...the far end of the bridge dipped into the ground and didn't come anywhere near the sky. "Do you think my mother is at the end of that bridge? Somewhere up there in the big sky?"

Crazy Man thought for a moment before replying. "Maybe all of our mothers are at the end of that bridge...somewhere up there in the big sky."

The dog, Sidestepper, was suddenly excited as hell. "You really think so!" he said.

"Not really," said Crazy Man.

Just as the dog, Sidestepper, was about to start rolling around on the ground and wailing out reams self pity, two words turned his legs into cement. (Not really though. That can't happen. I mean...)

"Cross me!" commanded the two words. "For I am a bridge and crossing me will get you to the other side," said the two words now presenting as a bridge.

Needless to say, Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were astounded. They couldn't believe that anything, especially a bridge, would think for a moment they would leave the path of adventure and new meanings just to cross it and probably be dropped into the big sky.

"Is my mother at the other end of you?" said the dog, Sidestepper.

"No," said the bridge, "and you're a bastard."

Just as Crazy Man was about to ask the bridge if it had a map to food, the bridge said, "No!"

In that instant, Crazy Man knew that this was no friendly bridge. This bridge would likely go too far and would lead them right off the path of adventure and new meanings to fall into the void under the big sky and never find food or a mother.

"Then why would we leave the path of adventure and new meanings to cross you?" said Crazy Man. "You're a nasty bridge and from here it looks like you lead nowhere."

"Looks aren't everything," said the bridge. "Just gaze upon my girders, my deck, my superstructure, my girders and piers. I'm a marvel of modern engineering, designed to get you across the water without you getting a drop of wetness."

This brought recent, or maybe ancient, echoes into the minds of Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper. They vaguely remembered something about getting wet *under* bridges but they...

"Traveling on my deck is much better than traveling under me," said the bridge in an impolite act of interrupting the narration. "I'm sure you've heard that you'll get wet going *under* me."

"But why would we cross the water?" said the dog, Sidestepper.

"Because you can," said the bridge.

"But what if we don't want to?" said Crazy Man.

"Then I cease to mean anything to you with all my mechanic marvels," said the Bridge. "And I'll stop talking to you."

“OK,” said Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, in unison.

“OK,” said the bridge. “I was just joking. I’ll talk to you. I mean, don’t you ever feel like crossing the river but you can’t swim the tide?” The bridge went silent for a moment to give the two journeyers time to think about that. “That’s what I’m here for. No swimming for you guys today. Just cross me. I’ll keep the tide at bay.”

“But we don’t want to swim the tide and we don’t want to cross the bridge,” said Crazy Man.

“Oh...going to be like that, are you?” said the bridge. “Well...smart move. Smart move. I’m not a *pedestrian* bridge. I’m a motor vehicle bridge. I was going to wait until you were halfway across me and invite every car, truck, bus, SUV and bicycle in the area to cross over me all at the same time.”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, shared perplexed looks with each other. Could this technological marvel be that mean?

“No!” yelled the bridge and laughed as bridges are wont to laugh. “Just kiddin’ you. Low traffic day. I got bored. Saw you guys...and...well...”

In a fit of empathetic madness at the thought of the bridge’s boredom, Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, rolled their heads and spun their eyes for who knows how long.

“HEY YOU TWO!” said the bridge. “Cut that out. It’s creepy.”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were offended to the core of their mutual beingness. “Not as weird as bridge with a bad sense of humor,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

In a nonsensical total denial of reality, the bridge shrugged. “I do what I can. Have a safe journey.”

“You too,” said Crazy Man, hand over mouth to hide his smirk.

And the two continued on their journey, dog sidestepping, man’s eyes lit in terror as he realized he was wearing his clown nose.

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Meanwhile, at the far end of the bridge a thoroughly confused man staring at his cell phone walked off the end of the bridge and fell into the void.

And the bridge in an astounding act of rebuked reality, smirked.

To be continued...

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