

la diabla

the wind is a cruel mistress
norteamericanos don't know her
unless they live on lake superior
or spend hurricane season
on the gulf coast
in spanish
the devil is *el diablo*
but the wind is *la diabla*
she hides
and waits for my motorcycle
at the top of a rise
where the gravel is fresh and deep
she takes in a great breath
to give back the same gusts
that pounded magellan's ship
down this coast
patagonia
the land of short bushes
people with big feet
to resist the power
of *la diabla*

with good fortune
you come to understand her
her personality
she sometimes loses focus
she forgets about you
your chance to escape her
then in a mood swing
she's back
blowing you across the mounds of gravel
between tire tracks
I curse myself
"ride this bike you fucking baby
or get off and walk"
I plead with myself

“you can do this”
all day I struggle
my arms and neck are nothing but pain
from leaning the bike hard right
to fight the wind
and in an instant I’m down
skidding on the pannier
12 days
4000 kilometers
impossible switchbacks
and always *la diabla*
all this I survived
to be down
on a straight road
from a bit of sand
like a prizefighter
who’s survived vicious hooks
and a pounding to the body
finding himself
on his ass
from a slight jab

but it’s not the sand
it’s the wind
she has robbed my soul
she has sucked my energy
and put me down
i gaze out on
this beautiful patagonia
and el diabla
racing through the tall grasses