

Good to go

Now, this doesn't look good.

Brake lights, brake lights, brake lights. A domino topple of red stop lights ripples back from some non-event up ahead. Some idiot blew his nose too abruptly and a Mexican wave of mini traffic lights all went red in neat little pairs.

There are no green lights on a motorway to tell you that you can go. You just go when you can. Another short burst of hemmed in freedom until the next tsunami of 'stop' floods the road.

And everyone stops. It's what you do. Well, not everyone. Occasionally someone will be thinking about a typo in a spreadsheet and end up turning the four cars ahead into a mangled concertina – metal and occupants whining in harmony.

But no one would deliberately avoid stopping. Even if you were in the darkest cloud of depression, you can still see clearly that this is no way to go.

'Go.' We use that word for death. Not 'Stop.' Some elderly relative whose legs have stopped for years and now whose heart suddenly stops. Everything stops. The relatives breathe a sigh of relief. But it wasn't time for them to stop; it was obviously time for them to go.

But, if you wanted to go, this was no way to do it. Cars are not designed to kill. Cars have crumple zones; people are crumple zones – head-to-toe squashable flesh and bone.

There was a website I saw once, one of those weird things you get emailed on a Friday afternoon when even the notion of pretending to work has left the building, it was all about methods of suicide.

The basic gist was that there isn't a nice clean way to go. An overdose will more than likely be survived, only to leave an irreversible and slow, agonising death from liver failure. Jumping off a high building is probably the best method, but you have to go high enough, or else you just end up crumpling your legs and spine and have to be slopped into a wheelchair with a fish slice.

But going high has two big drawbacks. The fall is long enough for you to change your mind several times on the way down and then there's the mess. Imagine taking the top of a toothpaste tube and dropping that onto concrete; your body is exactly the same. When you hit the ground, all your innards come spurting out through your arse.

You're obviously too dead to notice or care about such details, but spare a thought for the poor sod who has to cat's cradle your intestines into the body bag.

At least in a car there's a box to hold you all in. A crumply box, but a box all the same – your flexible friend. If you could drive your car up onto a building then you could just drive off and put on some distracting music to take your mind off things. Or one of those adverts on commercial radio would do it.

I've always felt sorry for the session singers that sing the ad jingles. They spend their lives honing their voices to angelic perfection, only to end up having to pretend to be emotional about creosote.

You could sing along to this woman who's on now, belting out an anthem to the joys of ending trapped wind, oblivious to your car sailing through the air towards the terminal terra firma below.

But here on the motorway the ground is only a harmless foot away. Everything else is squashable. The cars, their drivers, even the crash barriers have no stamina and will crumple at the slightest impact.

But there's always the flyover. The huge smooth concrete wall welcoming you to dive into it like a fresh snowdrift. Turn a flyover into a flyinto and you might wake the corpses of gangster sleeping inside, but the flyover itself wouldn't budge. Plough a car into that massive immovable slab and the flyover wouldn't so much as itch.

But the most dignified gift of the flyover is that there's no stigma for those you leave behind. No coroner is going to hang the label of 'suicide' on the family at the inquest. At best they will blame the car and at worst they'll just criticise your driving. He was too fast. It was too wet. A lack of concentration. A loss of control. Car. Flyover. All over.

Don't let this morbid topic fool you, I am not suicidal. Look at this line of traffic cones parading along the central reservation, preparing to ambush the fast lane with some surprise road works. There's a cone about every metre; you could easily remove half of them and still have an effective barrier. But what about if you just removed a single cone from somewhere right in the middle? What difference would that make?

Absolutely none at all.

People who commit suicide have given life a 'go' and failed to a point where they decide life is irreparable. I have never given life a go. I am not sad or depressed in any way. I just don't feel like I should be here. It isn't that my time has come to go; it was never my time. I feel I am an anomaly that needs to be removed.

But removed cleanly. If you don't leave a suicide note, then endless questions will always be asked. "Why did he do it?" "Why didn't we see it?" "What could we have done?"

There's no point removing your erroneous life from the world if you leave hundreds of tormented people talking about you forevermore. Or not talking about you and finding nothing else to say – that black silence – who wants to be the dead elephant in the otherwise-living living room?

But leave a note trying to explain all this and you will still fail. Why erase yourself from history, but leave a written document shouting, "Woohoo, I was here once!" for all to see and ponder endlessly? If you ever want to be remembered then disappear and leave a note saying 'forget me.' They never will.

But the beauty of the flyover. Unfortunate accident. Life over, the unfortunate accident of my existence undone. With a good run up on the hard shoulder and then? And then nothing. The run up never ends. No army of brake lights ahead and no brake lights on your own car. Never stop. It's time to go. Go! Go! Go!

The biggest worry I have now is my thumbs. I heard this DJ on the radio once talk about how his airbag firing off in an accident had caused the casing of his steering wheel to rocket off with such speed that it took his thumbs off and left them hanging back the wrong way. Whenever I recall that broadcast I quickly fold my

thumbs up with my hands, out of the way of the steering wheel's escape route, but it's tricky to drive like that for too long.

Can I keep control of a car at high speed on a rough hard shoulder with thumbs safely tucked up and still hit the flyover neatly. The thought of my entire body as a whole entity being crushed is an abstract and vague notion that I am comfortable with. But the idea of feeling the pain of my thumbs being wrenched back at rocket speed, even for a tiny fraction of a second, is not something I am prepared to live with. Or die with.

Traffic has started moving at a nice pace now. I can get up to quite a speed and there's a lot of clear diagonal spaces where an 'out of control' car can slide from the frenzy of the fast lane across onto the calm serenity of the hard shoulder.

I start taking note of the concrete candidates making blurry auditions so I can get a feel for the best type of structure to make my exit. I judge all the different types on ease of access, straightness of wall angle and length of run up.

Up ahead I see one of those highway maintenance trucks parked up that have the huge flashing 'keep right' arrows upon it. It seems like a perfect piece of irony that is calling me in.

It's now or never. Now is my never.

The car eases neatly onto the hard shoulder and I tuck my thumbs up. I take a deep breath. What good is breath now?

A man begins singing on the radio that sounds like he wants to make love to his loft insulation. I begin to sing along and realise that this idiotic crooning may be the last piece of human contact I receive.

And that's when I realise that I just cannot do this. No, I am still going to slam my car and life into a motorway flyover at top speed. I just can't bring myself to do it while singing about loft insulation. It isn't a distraction at all; the ludicrous jingle is just emphasising the seriousness ahead.

It's not as if anyone will ever know. There will be no record that I died while signing, "Even my beams are beaming now I've installed Thermostreaming," but it just feels wrong. I shouldn't really care, as I won't be around to recall the moment, but something about the inappropriateness just feels as if it will leave a mark. A permanent stain upon time itself that will always be there, marking the fact that this was done in a way that was wrong.

It would be like shooting yourself through the skull with a double-barrelled shotgun, only to have two neat pools of blood form Mickey Mouse ears around your head as you lay dying.

I need a clean getaway. I need a half-decent sounding song.

As I scan through the subliminal crackles of the tunes on offer, a burst of colour explodes into my peripheral vision like a firework. Too small to be a car, possibly a road sign, most probably a motorbike. I have no idea if the rider is still near it or safely clear, but this uninvited obstacle has no part in my plan and, before I can think through this change in events, I have instinctively swerved back towards the heaving rat race to the right. Abort! Abort! Abort!

But having chosen to leave the race of life, I am not allowed back in quite so easily. The suspension is having a panic attack, bumping along a cobbled purgatory between the hard shoulder and the road.

And then I am free of it all. Flying. Having found a neat ramp in the angled end of the crash barrier, the car has elegantly sailed into the air and is spinning over. Up is down. Down is up.

I see the horrified stares of the brake lights below me through the windscreen and even press my own brakes with all my might. But brakes are no help when you're airborne. Even airbrakes are no use unless your name is Bugs Bunny.

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