aqueduct that moulds into the buildings of the town. The bicycles are transport sector workers, though it's not worth mentioning a wage, but they have accommodation and the health care, covering everything from puncture to rusty pedal, is comprehensive. It's a very silent, stationary touting they do, true, but to be expected when it is well-known that bicycles have no ability of speech; and despite having a good pair of wheels neither can they move independently. Yet they beckon the tourist with a promise: ironically of independence to be realised in an alignment with the rider, in moving out to observe, in circles, the world.

The bicycle must like the prospect of an afternoon beyond the shop; and although a minor jaunt around the sites of Evora must please, for Evora is a world heritage site and one of Europe's oldest cities, a longer journey into the countryside, with that sense of freedom from flying along a country road and off into the dirt laneways beyond the villages must be preferred. The bicycle must like the name of Cromlech of the Almendres with its promise of fresh air and fast, fulfilling, tiring pedalling. It's a thirty kilometre round trip at the least, a good run, unless the Zambujeiro dolmen is included in the tour in which case it's further than that.

The bicycle was used to the ways of the tourists. Often it had to stop briefly at a random grocery store before leaving town and wait for its rider to buy a few snacks and drinks for the day.

In the fields beyond the city, tell me of the cork oak, robust and stunted, wrinkled and crumpled, an old man waiting at a bus stop or an old woman too weary to share the wisdom of longevity. Tell me how the cork oaks in the grove live for up to 250 years, how the first harvest of bark will be twenty five years after its sapling age and how each subsequent harvest will be at a gap of nine to twelve years thereafter. Tell me of the harvest done with simplicity, without machinery, by hand, for the wine bottle and the cork tile and remember to include that the Mediterranean dweller, the cork oak, cannot be chopped and is protected in Portugal.



Path between the olive trees. Go little bicycle, go!

And I'll tell you of the olive: that small elliptical fruit on its silver-grey bushes lined up across the fields. For salads it's simple but the olive comes with a history and I'd mention that Homer's Odysseus crawled beneath two olive shoots and Roman poet Horace included it in his diet. In the Quran it is a blessed tree. I'll have you note it too that the olive tree can live on for two thousand years.

The bicycle liked no doubt the landscape of low