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I reading

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Opening extract from

Monsieur Albert Rides to Glory

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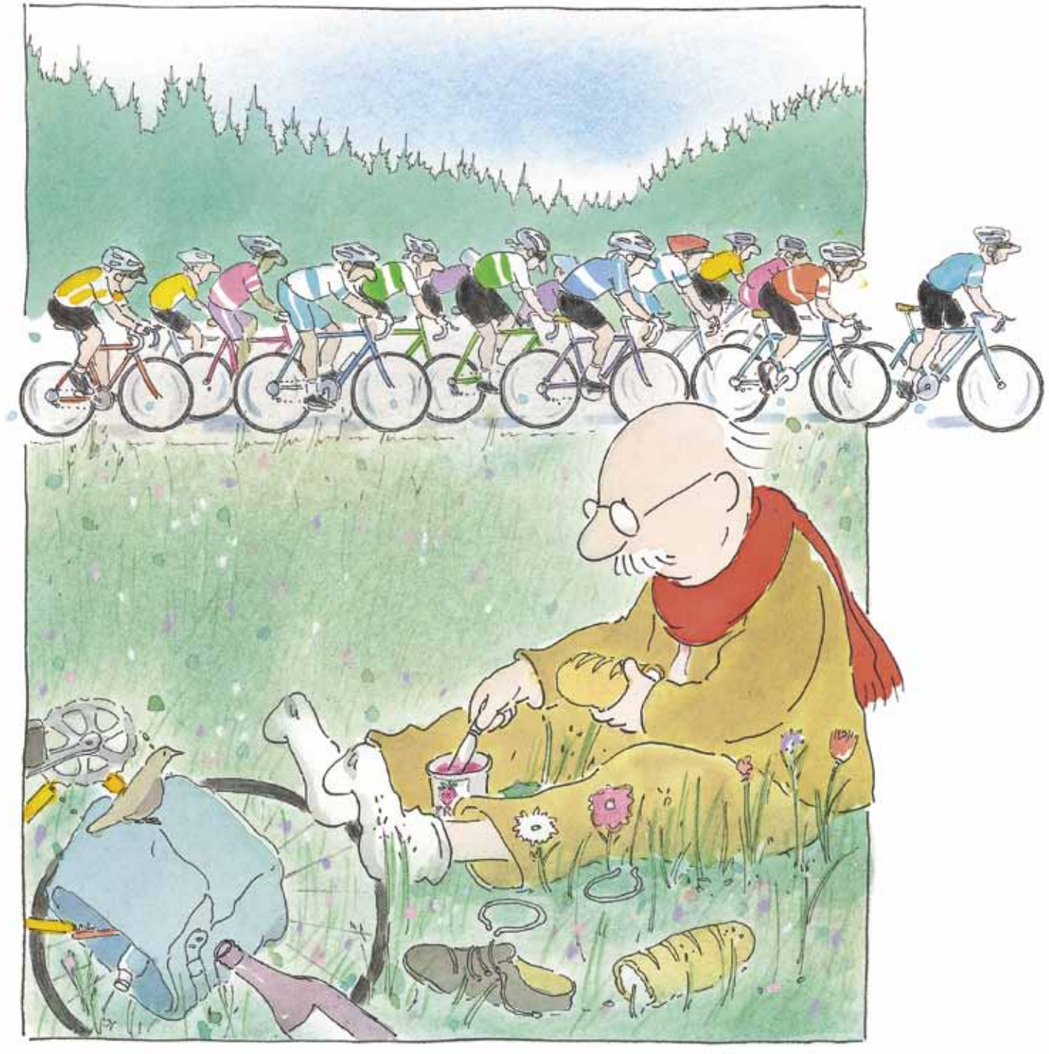


'It's from Paris,' he reads, 'down to Nice, Cote d'Azur.
A marathon pedalling feat, that's for sure!
But I'm fit for my age and I've got a good bike,
and a fabulous prize! – that's the bit that I like!'



He notices François (whom everyone fears,)
a whirlwind of elbows, a clicking of gears.
He's champion of France and a millionaire,
he trains on frogs legs and vin ordinaire.

In a shower of gravel François is gone
at incredible speed down the road to Dijon.
Old Albert is trying but hasn't a chance
of catching the cycling hotshot of France.





He stops by the road for a bit of a rest,
eats the crust of his bread (it's the bit he likes best.)
The riders zoom past as he remounts his bike
and sets off again in the fast-fading light.

He's saddlesore, weary and riddled with cramp,
his trusty old jacket is wrinkled and damp.
He beds down for the night where a slow river flows
but his legs keep on pedalling in uneasy doze.