

The Text

Chapter 1

Darnell Sidwell had just crossed the Severn Bridge on the M4, heading west. He read the highway sign: "Sound Sculpture Ahead. Move to outer left lane, maintain speed of 70 kph". He pulled the little Honda rental hybrid into the left lane carefully, and thought about setting the cruise control, but was unsure where to find it on the unfamiliar right-hand drive vehicle. At least the damned thing was an automatic, meaning he was spared having to learn to shift gears with his left hand. He chuckled at this thought, appreciating the irony of a space shuttle pilot intimidated by having to learn to drive on the wrong side of the road.

But he had wanted to come visit Claire, his sister. And before he headed into the north where she had her little community, he wanted to check out this 'sound sculpture'. It had been designed by an old friend back in Missouri, an artist who used to run a gallery in Columbia and who had a penchant for large conceptual works.

The Honda crossed the first warning rumble strips. Darnell turned his attention to the sound of the tires crossing the strips, and a few moments later was treated to a long, drawn-out rumble over a series of carefully spaced and specially designed strips, which distinctly said: "WWW-ELL-CCCCOOOOOMMMME-TOOOO-WWWAAALLESSES".