

OLYMPIC CYCLIST  
HALEY SMITH FOUND  
BALANCE CLIMBING  
HER TOUGHEST HILL

BY BLAIR CRAWFORD

# PEACE ON TWO

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHNNY C.Y. LAM

# WHEELS

“Chaotic, fast, and terrifying right from the start.”

If that doesn't sound like fun to you, then don't try to keep up with Queen's graduate student and Olympic cyclist Haley Smith.

That's how Ms. Smith described her ride in last October's 161-kilometre Big Sugar Gravel bike race in Bentonville, Ark. It was the final event in the prestigious and punishing six-race season that made up the 2022 Life Time Grand Prix.

Ms. Smith didn't win at Big Sugar. She didn't need to. With one win and two more top-three finishes, she was named the overall female champion in the series, which combines traditional mountain biking – her specialty – with racing on dirt and gravel back-country roads.

As champion, Ms. Smith took home the US\$25,000 grand prize.

It was an impressive accomplishment for the 29-year-old, especially considering the two passengers she carried with her for every gruelling, gravel-covered kilometre.

One was her angel, who whispered encouragement and kept her focused on the prize.

On the other shoulder was the demon, the one who tried to undermine her every action; the one who represented the eating disorder that nearly took her life when she was in Grade 9.