

**FAREWELL TO MY BICYCLE, 1997-2019**

Aquila, you are no more an eagle  
than I am an archangel. We both

ride life's common paths  
without speed or daring.

Our virtues are perseverance  
and compassion.

(cont)

Long before I forgave myself  
you forgave me when

in my fledgling years I dropped  
you on gravel paths, on attempted

curb jumps, on damp roads  
just revealing their oily coats.

You sensed my tight grasp,  
my tentative mount, darting

hand signals. A patient teacher  
you trusted in learning.

We crossed bridges, circled  
New York neighborhoods, rose

in pre-dawn darkness to ride  
for charity. Shivering.

Grateful those enormous towers  
broke the wind, not imagining

they would be reduced to soot and rubble.  
We would return to ride and witness.

We traveled urban greenways, Vermont  
hills we thought mountains,

all-night group rides, beach trips  
navigated with paper maps.

We went to meetings. We bought  
groceries, postage, meals.

Non-riders marveled at my daring.  
The strength of one so small.

I looked at your 13-inch-frame,  
and smiled. But now it's time

for my new bike, your new home.  
I deliver you to a shop

(cont)

where they ooh and ahh over  
your cream frame and grip gears.

I do not know how to say  
good-bye. Except to say it.

*Tokarczyk*

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