

POETRY

On the road from Bethany

"A Harley Road King, definitely the bike Jesus would ride ..."

— Father Mark Giordani, at the blessing of the bikes,
The New York Times

Christmas Eve, I had the graveyard shift.
Rhythmic thump of litter wheels rushing
down the hall; they'd brought him in
red lights flashing —
a big guy, leather clad,
he'd taken a bad spill on his bike.

We cut off his torn jeans, his jacket
that bore the name *Judas* in bold script.
Right tib-fib, left wrist, rib fractures —
possible flail chest.
Semiconscious, he opened his eyes,
looked up at me.

"On Tuscan roads towards Rome — *Vincents, Hondas, Harleys,*
Jesus in the lead.
Then four abreast we roared
past Castel Sant' Angelo, gathered
by St. Peter's Holy Door."

"I saw Jerusalem, the Temple once again,
the Pharisees arrayed against him,
Gethsemane, then Golgotha.

"Know where you are?" I said. "What happened?"

"Jesus popped a wheelie, raised a fist.
*Here is a people that pays lip service,
but their minds are far removed from me!*"

He coughed, spat up blood,
began to desaturate.
I tubed him.

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