

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.

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

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.