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.

Richard Bronson MD 
Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Medicine, Stony Brook University Medical Center, 
Stony Brook, NY