



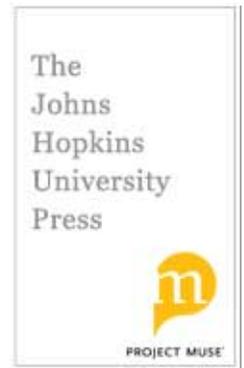
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A Motorcyde

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A Motorcycle

Four years ago, my mother had a tumor, an acoustic neuroma.
Doctors cut it out, and she healed. It took months.

Leading up to the operation, my mother and father were scared.
Afterwards, they were relieved, and still scared.

My mother recounted their conversations to me over the phone.
They were discussing how unpredictable life is.

My father, who had wanted a motorcycle since high school,
decided he would buy one. And for the first time,

my mother didn't protest. I was shocked on the phone. We,
including my father, called motorcycles death

machines while I was growing up. But he was convincing
my mother. He would not take it on the highway.

It would save gas money. His car was getting so old. Soon
we were looking at models, colors, my sister

accompanied him to dealerships where he sat on the giant seats
and found which he liked, which he could sit

straight on. And next thing, he had found one on Craigslist, for
sale by a boy my age who was settling down.

I wondered if my father gave him hope for his 50 year old self.
I wondered what other decisions in the house

were being influenced by how my parents were so nervous about
life being temporal. I wondered if the thought

of death filled the house. And I was glad I was in Austin while
all this blew over them. What remains is only

how my mother still can't look at my father on his motorcycle.
When she's on the phone, pining for spring,

I think of how the motorcycle will come out again, the padded,
leather jacket, the boots, and the helmet.