

1983

The Motorcyclists

James Tate

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Recommended Citation

Tate, James. "The Motorcyclists." *The Iowa Review* 13.3 (1982): 117-117. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.2945>

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The Motorcyclists · *James Tate*

My cuticles are a mess. Oh honey, by the way,
did you like my new negligee? It's a replica
of one Kim Novak wore in some movie or other.
I wish I had a footlong chili dog right now.
Do you like fireworks, I mean not just on the 4th
of July, but fireworks anytime? There are people
like that, you know. They're like people who like
orchestra music, listen to it anytime of day.
Lopsided people, that's what my father calls them.
Me, I'm easy to please. I like pingpong and bobcats,
shatterproof drinking glasses, the smell of kerosene,
the crunch of carrots. I like caterpillars and
whirlpools, too. What I hate most is being the first
one at the scene of a bad accident.

Do I smell like garlic? Are we still in Kansas?
I once had a chiropractor make a pass at me,
did I ever tell you that? He said that your spine
is happiest when you're snuggling. Sounds kind
of sweet now when I tell you, but he was a creep.
Do you know that I have never understood what they meant
by 'grassy knoll.' It sounds so idyllic, a place to go
to dream your life away, not kill somebody. They
should have called it something like the 'the grudging notch.'
But I guess that's life. What is it they always say?
'It's always the sweetest ones that break your heart.'
You getting hungry yet, hon? I am. When I was seven
I sat in our field and ate an entire eggplant
right off the vine. Dad loves to tell that story,

but I still can't eat eggplant. He says I'll be the first
woman President, it'd be a waste since I talk so much.
Which do you think the fixtures are in the bathroom
at the White House, gold or brass? It'd be okay with me
if they were just brass. Honey, can we stop soon?
I really hate to say it but I need a lady's room.