

Jesus-Under-The-Dirt

There is a big man with no English
on the High Street
who begins to cry if you give him money.
He calls you “Mama” and wants to hug you,
and he is a horror to look at:
running nose and mucus on his sleeves
and an open sore on his lip and
the dirtiest wrists,
under his sweater where no shirt is.
Odd shoes.
And grey-grease-naked ankles like you’ve
never seen, under no socks.

I hate it when he hugs me;
and he hangs on a long time.
But if he is Jesus, under the dirt,
if he is raving, hungry Jesus, under the dirt,
then I must hug him.
Mustn’t I?

I haven’t got far with this contamination thing.
I have moved beyond
dogs and crumbs-under-the-table,
but not far.

Foxes have holes, birds have nests.
Sobbing, aching Jesus-Under-The-Dirt
has no place to lay his head.



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