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"Walk from Union Station to Millennium Park"

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"Walk from Union Station to Millenium Park"

The man with the Witness magazine plants himself on the corner.
His voice stretches out into the iron wild,
John the Baptist of back alleys and soup kitchens.
In January, his dark hands, laced with dry white,
pat the air like a brother.
The packing case strapped to his bike asks me, “Do you know Jesus?”

Three skinny black boys in baggy shirts hunker down on plastic tubs,
banging a beat to the sound of change clattering into a paper cup,
    enough to buy a bus ticket, a sandwich, coffee.
    I wonder, do these boys have dreams?
    Beyond this hour? This winter? This year?

A woman wanders through the marching suits.
    “Sir, could you buy me some food?”
One man sidesteps, avoiding damp eyes
    that cut straight to the heart of darkness.
    Do you know Jesus?

A man sits under a bedraggled umbrella, his knees sticking out into the hammering hail.
On the sidewalk under the L, a man lies face first, spread-eagled, passed-out, stone-drunk.
I join the priests and the Pharisees in the river that passes forgotten stones.
    Do you know Jesus?