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Photograph of the Bruised Child

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Photograph of the Bruised Child

He looks out, with fifteen months
behind him, through a slit on the
right side of his face, the lid
puffed and flared around his eye,
purple and red, thick clouds
around the flattened bulge
of a half-set sun. The image
is like a miracle, against such
perfection of skin.

You have seen him, he is shown now
everywhere, at checkout stands
in grocery stores, in newsprint
commuters thumb on trains, and what
strikes you first is not the bundle
of burst capillaries, each one fine
as a baby's hair, but what is left
untouched, the clear deep window
of his knowing other eye.

You love the ripe familiar pinch
of fat creased smoothly under his arm,
and you notice the faint blue, like shadow,
where a hand was laid on his shoulder.
But always to the full wide eye
you return, as he must, to see
clearly what will stay with him.

Theodore Worozbyt