

The Word That Is a Prayer

One thing you know when you say it:

a child blurting it out as the seizures take her,

a woman reciting it on a cot in a hospital.

What if you take a cab through the Tenderloin [location-San Francisco]:

at a street light, a man in a wool cap,

yarn unravelling across his face, knocks at the window;

he says, *Please*.

By the time you hear what he's saying,

the light changes, the cab pulls away,

and you don't go back, though you know

someone just prayed to you the way you pray.

Please: a word so short

it could get lost in the air

as it floats up to God like the feather it is,

knocking and knocking, and finally

falling back to earth as rain,

as pellets of ice, soaking a black branch,
collecting and drains, leaching into the ground,
and you walk in that weather every day.

Author: Ellery Akers

Practicing the Truth is the name of his book.