

# Contraction

By Ravi Shankar

Honest self-scrutiny too easily mutinies,  
mutates into false memories  
Which find language a receptive host,  
Boosted by boastful embellishments.

Self-esteem is raised on wobbly beams,  
seeming seen as stuff enough  
To fund the hedge of personality,  
Though personally, I cannot forget

Whom I have met and somehow wronged,  
wrung for a jot of fugitive juice,  
Trading some ruse for a blot or two,  
Labored to braid from transparent diction

Fiction, quick fix, quixotic fixation.  
As the pulse of impulses  
Drained through my veins, I tried to live  
Twenty lives at once. Now one is plenty.

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Source: *Instrumentality* (Cherry Grove Collections, 2005)