

Bodhisattva

by Dan Gerber

When the young man on State Street
approached as if to ask directions,
saying, "Can you help me out a little here?"
and I, though I already knew, said,
"Help you out how, exactly?"
"A dollar or two if you can,"
he said, and I took a deep breath,
holding in what I might've held out,
hearing *When someone asks, you
give what you can*, from my bank
of training in the ways of compassion,
and though I didn't want to,
opened my wallet, and
with the munificence of a toad,
pulled out a five and bought him off.

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