

Take These Depositions

Casualene Meyer

"I am Richard II.
know ye not that?"
—Queen Elizabeth

"The king is not himself ... "
—Richard II (2.1.241)

I.

Let's talk of griefs,
of wombs,
of epithets.

Why is "Mother"
an epithet?

II.

When my son cries tonight, I
say: Let Mama love you.
When he hungers, I
say: Let Mama feed you.

Mama does so much for him,
I so little.

III.

My son.
Is he the deposition
or the abdication
of my I?

Shall I
no longer be
myself?
Ay no no ay ...

IV.

Abdication and abduction
are consonant—
the same in bone,
they differ only in breath.

V.

Not all the water in a woman
can wash the balm
from off a self-appointed queen.