

Prayer at Queen and Yonge

What was he thinking,
The young soldier with the empty sleeve
And one foot off,
Watching the long, noisy Conga line
That snaked down Yonge Street?

You couldn't tell by his eyes.
They were neither interested
Nor excited –
A little tired, maybe,
And sad, surely,
But not interested.

He stood in a safe doorway
And seemed more alone
Than anyone ought to be
On a day of celebration.
And yet, no one ventured to say to him,
“How is it with you ...?
What's the good word, Buddy?”

What he carried in his heart
Was his own quiet business.
If the shell that took his arm and foot
Also took his best friend
Well... your guess was as good as mine.
There were no cheers left in his heart
That much was apparent.

If by any chance he was toting up
What HE had paid for This Day
With his own body
I pray God, that for all the years of his life
He will find it a fair exchange.

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