

## **I Saw a Man Die**

*London, England*

I saw a man die in Regent Street this afternoon  
On a Sunday afternoon, too.  
I had been writing to all my Canadian friends  
And telling them the way to see life in London  
Is to stroll, in mid-London on a Sunday afternoon.  
It never occurred to me that  
Death might be strolling, too.

I had just passed a barrow.  
The barrow-man was selling ripe plums.

That was the colour of the  
Man's  
Face.  
He lay flat on his back on the sidewalk  
And his face was the colour of the plums  
The ripe purple plums in the  
Barrowman's barrow.

The girl who had been walking with the man  
Had her hands over her mouth;  
Her eyes like terrified, animals' eyes.  
She kept kneeling down over the purple-faced man.  
And then?  
Shrinking back into a doorway.

A taxi man came and put his hand over the man's heart.  
He got back into the cab and  
Drove away.  
A man in a white cap worked the prone man's arms  
And massaged his shirt front.  
Somebody put a newspaper under his head.  
And then there was a great clang-clang  
And the ambulance  
Came.

And you had this outlandish thought  
That wouldn't go away.  
That the poor fellow had chosen  
A pretty fashionable place to  
Die.

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Beautiful, curving, quiet, handsome  
Regent Street.  
The shady side.  
With Liberty's silken windows  
Glimmering like mirrors on the  
Sunny one.

But the poor fallen man  
With his head on the pavement.  
And the girl, with her fist in her mouth.

And I, the coward, who walked swiftly  
Away  
Saw a man die in  
Regent Street.

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