

In London, on Sunday

Kensington Palace looked like Versailles.
We fed the birds, laughed, talked
tourist talk of Charles and Di.
Fresh from church at Hyde Park ward,
we glowed with brotherhood.
Outside the gate, my friends and I
chatted with a Cockney selling Flake,
accent rich as his ice cream,
who spotted us for Mormons.
It was Sabbath; we didn't buy.

A grimy, gap-toothed woman
clutching a baby approached me,
said something I couldn't
understand. I shook my head;
she asked again. "Please, can ye
spare a dollar to feed the baby?"
I said I hadn't brought money.
Tucked inside my blouse, hanging
on a ribbon like a noose,
five pound coins weighed fifty.
"But wait," I said. Too late.

—Karen Todd