Please Don't Pass Me By (A Disgrace)

Leonard Cohen

I was walking in New York City and I brushed up against the man in front of me. I felt a cardboard placard on his back. And when we passed a streetlight, I could read it, it said "Please don't pass me by - I am blind, but you can see - I've been blinded totally - Please don't pass me by." I was walking along 7th Avenue, when I came to 14th Street I saw on the corner curious mutilations of the human form; it was a school for handicapped people. And there were cripples, and people in wheelchairs and crutches and it was snowing, and I got this sense that the whole city was singing this:

Oh please don't pass me by,
oh please don't pass me by,
for I am blind, but you can see,
yes, I've been blinded totally,
oh please don't pass me by.

And you know as I was walking I thought it was them who were singing it, I thought it was they who were singing it, I thought it was the other who was singing it, I thought it was someone else. But as I moved along I knew it was me, and that I was singing it to myself. It went:

Please don't pass me by,
oh please don't pass me by,
for I am blind, but you can see,
well, I've been blinded totally,
oh please don't pass me by.
Oh please don't pass me by.

Now I know that you're sitting there deep in your velvet seats and you're thinking "Uh, he's up there saying something that he thinks about, but I'll never have to sing that song." But I promise you friends, that you're going to be singing this song: it may not be tonight, it may not be tomorrow, but one day you'll be on your knees and I want you to know the words when the time comes. Because you're going to have to sing it to yourself, or to another, or to your brother. You're going to have to learn to sing this song, it goes:

Please don't pass me by,
ah you don't have to sing this .. not for you.
Please don't pass me by,
for I am blind, but you can see,
yes, I've been blinded totally,
oh please don't pass me by.

Well I sing this for the Jews and the Gypsies and the smoke that they made. And I sing this for the children of England, their faces so grave. And I sing this for a saviour with no one to save. Hey, won't you be naked for me? Hey,

won't you be naked for me? It goes:
Please don't pass me by,
oh please don't pass me by,
for I am blind, but you can see,
yes, I've been blinded totally,
oh now, please don't pass me by.
Now there's nothing that I tell you that will help you connect the blood tortured night with the day that comes next. But I want it to hurt you, I want it to end. Oh, won't you be naked for me? Oh now:
Please don't pass me by,
oh please don't pass me by,
for I am blind, but you can see,
but I've been blinded totally,
oh, please don't pass me by.
Well I sing this song for you Blonde Beasts, I sing this song for you Venuses upon your shells on the foam of the sea. And I sing this for the freaks and the cripples, and the hunchback, and the burned, and the burning, and the maimed, and the broken, and the torn, and all of those that you talk about at the coffee tables, at the meetings, and the demonstrations, on the streets, in your music, in my songs. I mean the real ones that are burning, I mean the real ones that are burning
I say, please don't pass me by,
oh now, please don't pass me by,
for I am blind, yeah but you can see,
ah now, I've been blinded totally,
oh no, please don't pass me by.
I know that you still think that its me. I know that you think that there's somebody else. I know that these words aren't yours. But I tell you friends that one day
You're going to get down on your knees,
you're going to get down on your knees,
you're going to get down on your knees,
you're going to get down on your knees,
you're going to get down on your knees,
you're going to get down on your knees,
you're going to get down on your knees,
you're going to get down on your knees,
you're going to get down ..
Oh, please don't pass me by,
oh, please don't pass me by,
for I am blind, yeah but you can see,
yes, I've been blinded totally,
oh, please don't pass me by.
Well you know I have my songs and I have my poems. I have my book and I have the army, and sometimes I have your applause. I make some money, but you know

what my friends, I'm still out there on the corner. I'm with the freaks, I'm with the hunted, I'm with the maimed, yes I'm with the torn, I'm with the down, I'm with the poor. Come on now ...
Ah, please don't pass me by,
well I've got to go now friends,
but, please don't pass me by,
for I am blind, yeah but you can see,
oh, I've been blinded, I've been blinded totally,
oh now, please don't pass me by.
Now I want to take away my dignity, yes take my dignity. My friends, take my dignity, take my form, take my style, take my honour, take my courage, take my time, take my time, .. time .. 'Cause you know I'm with you singing this song. And I wish you would, I wish you would, I wish you would go home with someone else. Wish you'd go home with someone else. I wish you'd go home with someone else. Don't be the person that you came with. Oh, don't be the person that you came with, Oh don't be the person that you came with. Ah, I'm not going to be. I can't stand him. I can't stand who I am. That's why I've got to get down on my knees. Because I can't make it by myself. I'm not by myself anymore because the man I was before he was a tyrant, he was a slave, he was in chains, he was broken and then he sang:
Oh, please don't pass me by,
oh, please don't pass me by,
for I am blind, yes I am blind, Oh but you can see,
yes, I've been blinded totally,
oh, please don't pass me by.
Well I hope I see you out there on the corner. Yeah I hope as I go by that I hear you whisper with the breeze. Because I'm going to leave you now, I'm going to find me someone new. Find someone new.
And please don't pass me by.

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