The pavement and the first bright leaves of the plane trees were washed like a watercolour as I walked past the statue of Danton, and read the words on the pedestal: "After bread, education is the first need of the people."

I crossed the street and passed a man on his knees, holding a sign that said, "Help me, please. I'm hungry."

Then I realised what I'd seen, I went back and put a coin in his hand. He was about thirty. He wasn't kneeling down, in comfortable meditation, but kneeling up, like a medieval penitent.

Others can explain this.

I only know I dream with Danton of a day when it's no longer possible for a man to kneel in the street with a sign saying M'aidez SVP J'ai faim, while another grown man weeps useless bourgeois tears all the way down Boulevard St Germain.