Traffic

Who will remember this long Edwardian boulevard
with electric trams running up and down it
like Vienna fin-de-siècle except
the thoroughfares have been cleared
only American jeeps scoot along them
the people jam the cordoned-off sidewalks where there
is no space the boulevard by contrast is all space
as if cleared for a parade in the air hangs
a sharp sense of anticipation
an openness beyond the ordinary a strangeness
from the burnt-out smoke-damaged buildings
standing shoulder-to-shoulder
with the untouched ones & no one looks twice
in the hustle and bustle men and women thread the crowded sidewalks
eyes fixed on the next thing to do
and as if by agreement neither side pays any mind to the other
jeeps hurtle through the opened spaces &
pedestrians disembark from trams warming from the sunlight
of an ordinary spring day
& close by an ambulance waits in the shadow of the stopped tram
and the uniformed policeman who directs the traffic
looks from a distance like a toy soldier
his right arm stiffly extended to indicate
a right of way or a formal salute
to the undirected streams which flow in front of him
behind him to his left to his right