

# IN MEMORY

It seems it was always during  
blander moods over booze that  
some new war would come growling  
on air waves to hound you to  
a fresh concern for people you  
would never know.

Your mind sniffing the stench of  
power, vomited the suffering of  
strangers; your words soured  
by the taste, deepened your scowl  
of indifference at the hearing of  
some petty local woe.

The face of a starved child wedged  
between print haunted you for weeks,  
and you looked to the jaws of the  
ultimate fiery beast and wondered,  
when.

You hated our class's connivance, knew  
(and sometimes envied) "their contrived  
emptiness" but loved them for their innocence,  
cursing the betrayal of their ragged honour.

I shall miss you Tom, our sober discussions  
and our drunken nights among the gentleness  
of hard men, and the loud women you held  
in disdain and used with contempt when the  
need became pressing.

Your mistrust of women was absolute.  
This sole ambiguity hung on you like  
a broken word.

How fiercely we argued,  
your eyes rejecting my vision of woman  
as the Saviour.

Wait for me in purgatory Tom,  
we may resolve it there.

If I could speak with you now  
I would shout louder than the  
violence of your demise.  
So many easy ways, quiet exits from

this world gone mad with the science  
we abhorred.

So why the gun good friend?

Did you hope its roar would drown out  
the cry of mankind?

That cry was ever your anguish.

Did you think perhaps, that for that

last fraction of your life's run,

you would be allowed this final

noisome peace? But no, you must

have known that the law of ballistics

would deny you even this.