

Exit at St Mary's

We, the unscripted, shamble past threadbare banners  
Of regimental dead, out under battleship skies  
And the rigging of ravens.

Polite strangers lower her casket on shipwright's ropes  
Into the raw gash of earth between carpets of AstroTurf  
Green as a cinema EXIT sign.

I see her still in black and white, an English matinee heroine  
Crimped hair, clipped vowels, slipped dreams of Trevor Howard,  
Not Uncle Pete with his quiff and limp.

There will be tea and the moistest of cakes, the vicar consoles us,  
In the Village Hall where the never defeated Women's Institute  
Once again have made a special effort.