

## THE BARRAGE

When the shells started falling,  
I,  
Like any sensible creature,  
Began ducking,  
Hiding,  
Covering my head,  
Covering me arse,  
Covering every part of me,  
Covering so much, so fast  
That, before long,  
I had hoped to become invisible.

But, it didn't really help, not all that much.  
For the shells, you see, were,  
As we all know from millions of war movies,  
Only the barrage before the assault,  
Before the infantry,  
With bayonets fixed,  
Burrowed down every hole,  
Into every cave,  
Overturning every rock,  
Tree limb and trunk,  
Looking for me,  
Looking to bury their blades  
Into my heart or chest or back,  
Whatever they found first  
In their thirst  
To end my days on planet Earth.

If this had been war, a real war, it might have been different.  
I might have thought,  
Before it began,  
To prepare for this,  
For every slight of hand  
A bitter enemy  
Might hurl my way.

But it wasn't war. It was theatre. A simple play. Among friends. A comedy, even.  
Yet, instead of laughter, there were tears.

Add confusion, now,  
To my fears,  
And to my thoughts of what lay ahead.