On Lacking the Killer Instinct

One hare, absorbed, sitting still

Right in the grassy middle of the track,

I met when I fled up into the hills, that time

My father was dying in a hospital –

I see her suddenly again, borne back

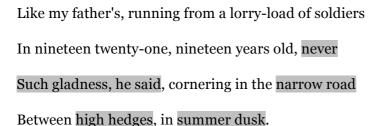
By the morning paper's prize photograph:

Two greyhounds tumbling over, absurdly gross,

While the hare shoots off to the left, her bright eye

Full not only of speed and fear

But surely in the moment a glad power,



The hare

Like him should never have been coursed,

But, clever, she gets off; another day

She'll fool the stupid dogs, double back

On her own scent, downhill, and choose her time

To spring away out of the frame, all while

The pack is labouring up.



The lorry was growling

And he was clever, he saw a house

And risked an open kitchen door. The soldiers

Found six people in a country kitchen, one

Drying his face, dazed-looking, the towel

Half covering his face. The lorry left,

The people let him sleep there, he came out

Into a blissful dawn. Should he have chanced that door?

If the sheltering house bad been burned down, what good

Could all his bright running have done

For those that harboured him?



And I should not

Have run away, but I went back to the city

Next morning, washed in brown bog water, and

I thought about the hare, in her hour of ease.

