

FOR WILFRED OWEN

Michael Mott

Surely by this time
these barbed vines
should have borne fruit,
the pineapple grenades
sprung their foliage,
the mines
detonated poppies?

It is the oldest cliché,
we flow out into flowers,
our lives released again
in the wind and the rain
along ramparts,

our bright eyes
are plucked by children
to be crammed into jamjars,
we inhabit white bowls
in the buttery farmhouses,
we are crushed under wagon wheels
and our sap stains the lovers.

We turned our backs
upon love
and the young girls gather us.

Our wives will wear black,
and the young girls gather us.

Long before Homer our metaphor
was the reaping and springing
of flowers.

Sentimental as soldiers
once
who sang along lanes —
surely these fields should be filled
with the fragrance of flowers.