

# War Photographer

In his darkroom he is finally alone  
with spools of suffering set out in ordered rows.  
The only light is red and softly glows,  
as though this were a church and he  
a priest preparing to intone a Mass.  
Belfast. Beirut. Phnom Penh. All flesh is grass.

He has a job to do. Solutions slop in trays  
beneath his hands which did not tremble then  
though seem to now. Rural England. Home again  
to ordinary pain which simple weather can dispel,  
to fields which don't explode beneath the feet  
of running children in a nightmare heat.

Something is happening. A stranger's features  
faintly start to twist before his eyes,  
a half-formed ghost. He remembers the cries  
of this man's wife, how he sought approval  
without words to do what he must  
and how the blood stained into the foreign dust.

A hundred agonies in black-and-white  
from which his editor will pick out five or six  
for Sunday's supplement. The reader's eyeballs prick  
with tears between the bath and pre-lunch beers.  
From the aeroplane he stares impassively at where  
he earns his living and they do not care.