

2005

Mametz Wood

going about everyday life still finding bones - emphasises quantity

length of time emphasised

For years afterwards the farmers found them - the wasted young, turning up under their plough blades as they tilled the land back into itself.

idea of shallow graves - no proper burial - disrespectful

emotive

A chit of bone, the china plate of a shoulder blade,
5 the relic of a finger, the blown
and broken bird's egg of a skull,

→ fragile

alliteration emphasises fragments

all mimicked now in flint, breaking blue in white
across this field where they were told to walk, not run,
towards the wood and its nesting machine guns.

← punctuation slows rhythm to mimic what's said.

↳ suggests nurturing

10 And even now the earth stands sentinel,
reaching back into itself for reminders of what happened
like a wound working a foreign body to the surface of the skin.

↳ to highlight ridiculousness of situation of walking towards death.

simile: wants to get rid of the pain

This morning, twenty men buried in one long grave,
a broken mosaic of bone linked arm in arm,
15 their skeletons paused mid dance-macabre

↳ caesura - highlights frozen in time feel and makes us consider the bones and gravity of situation

should be other way round

in boots that outlasted them,
their socketed heads tilted back at an angle
and their jaws, those that have them, dropped open.

↳ in aghast/horror/shock of what was happening to them.

As if the notes they had sung
20 have only now, with this unearthing,
slipped from their absent tongues.

sibilance

OWEN SHEERS

only now do we realise the tragedy of the moment.

structure: stanzas of even length - military?

Craziness within the structure