

“Home for Christmas”

by Susie Wilson

Facebook throws up a memory my brother chooses
to share. With whom? Comrades who called him “Sir”?
Or other “Sirs,” who had comrades, who called them “Sir”?
In a room in a barracks, Christmas tree, some cushions.
Northern Ireland, 1990s—looks like ‘80s from the hair.
Even in the Army, fashions make themselves felt, grow
where uniforms don’t reach. Calvin Klein or boxers, dear?
Short back and sides can’t stop hair flowing into curtains.
Keratin keeps oozing after death, so why not here, alive?
My brother mourns this platoon and his faux fatherhood
of boys, under his control, in his young, his uncertain hands.
Look at the lads, doing their best to look interested, he types.
Look at me, playing Santa Claus, with that sad sack of scratchy
balaclavas some old biddy knitted for us Union Jacks.