

there, no there

There's a picnic table  
In the old cemetery  
Where I sit and stare  
At the weathered stones  
Illumined by  
A low and parting light.  
There are graves there  
From the last war

And the one before that,  
And the one before that,  
Laying in broken rows  
Like holes in a battle line.

There has always been some  
Cause to be laid low for  
Dating back to before we  
Broke our way onto this land.  
People return every  
Spring, wearing uniforms  
From before their own time,  
Firing shots into the sky.

On a still day, smoke hangs  
Low in the leaden air,  
Like a memory  
Not wanting to fade.

It's damp, there alongside  
The limestone stream at  
The low end of the yard.  
After a rain, the water stands  
In the deep depressions  
Between head and foot stones;  
They're free now from marching  
Through the troubled fields.

On a grey day, moisture hangs  
Low in the laden air,  
Like an earth-bound soul  
Not knowing to leave.

R. Hight - September 2021