

## Elegy for Bert Trautmann

That I found a place you knew briefly; and in finding  
    found out about you,  
tells that these words, Bert, should not so much  
    sound as elegy, but become  
a toast, of sorts, to the flipped coin we call *time*:  
    somewhere between  
this restless shore and its restless world, which in '44  
    (or was it '45?)  
saw you take on the Home Guard Kop — lanky lads  
    from Southport who chose  
in those moments to lay their rifles down,  
    join you in the game.  
Or in my case, waded through a confetti  
    of Dark Green Fritillaries  
to stumble on Fort Crosby, your place of internment.  
    That the waves don't know  
of what came next — those punches and lunges,  
    that knee to your neck —  
is not to say that they, nor I, don't care; it is to say  
    that our lives, like the waves,  
are slack then taut; and that your dives to the crossbar  
    are as fleeting  
as the days; and we're all just hoping, Bert, not to hear  
    the final whistle.