

## Tears

The monsoon rain beats down on tin-roofed shed,  
Like waterfalls continuous in grey.  
It washes ground with pitting drops, it splashes round  
And spreads its greying liquid everywhere.

The Band seems choked, its bugles not quite tuned  
To this occasion – the tempo's different,  
The tune another variation on the theme [or so it seems].  
The Standards, held by gauntlet gloved Marines  
Stand still – in silhouette against the teeming rain.

King's Badgemen's Boards illuminate the side,  
Only the strip lights brighten this dark  
Drill Shed's apexed roof.  
The Hymns toll out.  
The Prayers "for those whose memory never fades".  
The Friends, the Friends, the Friends  
Like echoing bugles – calls back each to mind,  
Those who down the years of sacrifice have died.

Rosemary Sidwell