

K I M M A L I N O W S K I

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## Great Uncle

Glen was a digger, a tunneler,  
he was good at what he did, enjoyed it even.  
He was wounded three times and kept going back.  
He liked the monotony, it allowed him to think,  
to hear the music in his head.  
He was the group's listener because he had perfect pitch,  
each bomb's whine was just a little bit different,  
enough to bet his life on.  
He wasn't wrong those three times, just unlucky.

He loved the dirt, the coarseness of it,  
the subtly of texture.  
He crawled inch-by-inch in the darkness,  
dirt pressing on all sides,  
barely contained explosions causing dirt to shift.  
His heart beat louder than the thundering above him,  
enemy voices echoed in nearby shafts,  
the vibrations faint but distinct,  
everything was muted,  
reality seemed damp and distorted.

After the war, he wasn't the same,  
He painted the insides of airplane wings,  
each layer three millimeters thick, yellow,  
without smudge marks, or imperfections.  
No creativity or variation,  
inside the wing was comforting  
like the tunnels, quiet.

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