

KIERAN EGAN

## THE GRASSES OF KALININGRAD

The coloured grasses of Kaliningrad  
are high as a boar's head or a wolf's ear.  
A million densely serried acres here,  
which boar and wolf can hardly penetrate.  
Russets, whites, yellows, and tall poppy heads.  
Rushes, sedge, and fragrant fennel thicken  
where lines of dark green shrubs mark hidden streams.

All grass is flesh; these grasses thrive on flesh,  
and their dense vigour shows they feasted well  
on days of savage slaughter without check;  
they gorged and choked on dead men by the tonne.  
Rooted now round soldiers' bones, through field-grey rags  
and rotting boots, corroded guns and shells,  
in windy nights the grasses moan in German.