

DAVID WINWOOD

WARTIME 1

but no sweat, my mother had
tapioca on her shelf. A yellow
cardboard box, browning at the bottom.
Its contents labelled with a blackish
pen and ink on off-white paper.

No sweat, though people seemed
at work: women half turned, baskets awry,
black and lush leaves marching. Tapioca!
How full of far aware seductiveness
that word — my mother never used it.

Only four, but salt crystals were sown
into the furrows on my forehead:
I worked hard imagining big beasts
ploughing my fields. Away in Tapioca!
But my father kept popping up . . .

sweating and steaming he kept
popping up in the blue kitchen doorframe.
Only four, and I still couldn't count
so I know he stood there countless times,
shouting: "The war is over!"

It never was.