

LIAM FERNEY

AN ECSTASY OF FUMBLING 1

Thread the stitch through
and close the night wounds.

War is best waged
while the enemy sleeps.

Wilfred Owen of Tikrit
breathes freely,

not a mustard gas insectoid
of trench warfare,

they are the nonchalant Knights
of the Kevlar Table.

Slipknot stickered
on the side of his helmet;

residual radiation
doesn't make barracks conversation.

In the middle of November
the GIs start to worry

whether Blitzen, Dasher and Dancer
Vixen, Cupid and Prancer

can softshoe past the IEDs
up the Basra - Baghdad road.

The turkey fluffs the pilgrim's progress
at the post op photo op.

Constant jumbo jet tinnitus,
and sleep dep hallucinations

keep the patrol
as keen as Rambo's knife

but the worst news comes
on Christmas Eve

when Private Owen's e-card bounces back
and all that Sarge says is

*ain't no use in goin' home,
Jodie's got your girl alone.*

