Easter Monday, Germans
on the run, the Brits
whoop and dance in mud
and snow, celebrate
the rout. A pause
in the shooting, Thomas
leaves the dugout,
is about to fill his pipe
when a stray shell
whizzes past his post,
nails his heart. He falls,
unmarked, on each page
of the war diary
tucked in his pocket
a bizarre arc of creases
from the shock wave.
Preserved in the poet’s
crabbed hand, a line he wrote
just days before: *And no more
singing for the bird.*