

Fighting Position

Sunshafts settle through the thick jungle canopy
Illumine sporadically the level verge of a deepsetstream
Quilt of sunsquares on the jungle floor where men have stood before us
Now gone Christknowswhere
Batallion base camp says the aerial overlay
But down here it looks as if a few m'iserable dinks could squat
A few miserable days
Then move
On

These things are always the same
Cut into ridgelines hacked into hilltops sunk along brooksides
A living place wrenched from the hostile vegetation
Semicircles of holes where a man might hide
Hunkered down in the darkness with his thoughts
From whatever horror that a hole could possible console
A few miserable minutes
Then move
On

There's a regulation field latrine regulation downstream
Regulation cookfirepits buried into the slope and openvented to hide smoke regulation
And a regulation classroom area for regulation
Indoctrination and the updating of political propositions
Rough benches seats regulation even frames for regulation blackboards
Ideas can die so suddenly in the jungle or live just
A few miserable days
Then move
On

They were here ate slept hunched drilled and most
Of all hacked out these holes no not just holes
Says the Captain Fighting Positions a hole is what a grunt
Chops in the fetid rot after humping all day caved in sides
Dirt slung hell to breakfast utilitarian hasty hole
But these these are still perfect after the diggers have dwelt
A few miserable months
Then move
On

Absolutely geometrical square-sided plumb level
Sides raked down flawless and almost polished
Floor of the position we must call it position now
Flat and true-cornered drained built to endure to gouge
Human will into a recalcitrant jungle who will make
Her half hearted effort at eroding them washing them out growing them over
A few miserable weeks
Then move
On

Fighting positions the Captain says these are professionals
Not halfass stumblers like us they live here we visit
And in this slime and muck disease and heat under this eternal green shroud

Wracked with dysentery malaria dengue Christknowswhat not
To speak of what gnaws a man's soul out here
They carved these monuments to their own feverish glory to endure in time
A few miserable moments
Then move
On