The history of liberty is a history of resistance.

WW

Liberation was never black and white
or field grey, no matter how it looks from a distance.
On that ninth my father stood with his gang on the mount
    a mile from the Old Harbour, heard Tommies bruised by delight.
The ash faced enemy had shot from the tunnels beneath, leaving
    scatters of kit, prized back to Green Road under the glow of a setting sun.
We still have the helmet.
    Poppa made him take back the broomhandle Mauser.

Liberation that day was never just black and white,
or khaki, or crimson; look close.
The Jerrybag story is always the same, though
    rattle the facts and each rolls out quite singular.
Still, isn't an informant a relief? Or the profiteer, or that tart,
you can stack them down there, at a distance -
in the place where you are not -
Defined and confined in a line with obsidian men.

Today’s liberation may be comfortably viewed in seventeen million colours,
through saturated looking-glasses interlaced with sighs;
Endorsing irritation that we don’t have that thing yet,
    our sparkling equipment outstripping our eyes.
We build walls of artisan loaves where once not a bun could be had;
    buy tins of sweet froth, iced running shoes, jamfuls of cars and
    a choice of conspicuous fridges that look much the same
from a distance.

This year I pulled the plugs, liberated the two boys, younger but
    as full of running as my father was back then.
We danced on the mute grey forms still hung on the western coast,
pitted by the smack of fifty thousand tides,
    no incoming fire except BANG pointed fingers.
A counter wave of concrete poured by hands with no options;
    on the snout of the bay, they overran kill zones that never chattered in anger;
because they won; we won, we won.

Liberation is not black or white, or over.
What was endured did not end. It went travelling.
Those boys up top surveyed post-war bays for months;
    retook their coast on single gear bikes and mates back from Wurzach-Allgau.
Since that day we’ve evolved our own incarcerations. Eloquent snares that suggest
    you can lock them all out
as you lock yourself in.
Resist. Outside is the real isle. Hold your loves, find a setting sun. Write your own liberation.

Richard Pedley