

New Poetry by Peter Newall: “Deserters”



DRY REEDS RATTLING / image by
Amalie Flynn

DESERTERS

The lake, leaden.
Dry reeds
rattling
in the cold wind,
the flat sky scratched
with harsh birdcalls.
Over the hill
we came, shabbily,
no longer marching, badges
torn from our coats.

Below us
the burned manor
raising charred posts,
an empty accusation,
a futile cry of loss.
We were not the first.

In a roofless barn
a motorcycle, theirs, and
three grinning faces
under helmets. But eyeless;
the crows have no pity.

Amongst the cinders, books,
only a little scorched,
in our language.
We trod them underfoot. The time
for books
for language
for homeland
is long over.