

the memorable phrases of Shelley and Sidney to Aristotle and that asserts the sovereignty of the artist's kind of truth. The novelist, Conrad believed, was writing something 'truer than history' because it was the highest and most comprehensive kind of history. That is why in the end one has to choose between agreeing with Conrad's Marxist critics and agreeing with Conrad, just as one has to choose between agreeing with his 'psychological' critics and with the novelist himself.

Uncle

At last we have taken that picture down,
For more than twenty years his photograph
has looked out from our chimney-breast,
his calm, unblinking eyes watching us,
his regimental badge permanently bullshone.

As children we accepted his grey face
as part of the furniture, his fixed smile
hiding the fear of war — the khaki lie
of a young man nailed up on our wall,
pretending he was a soldier.

Three days later he was killed in France.
(Or was he drowned? I just forget.)
All I remember are the days of questioning,
the tears on faces I had not seen cry,
and then that blown-up photograph.

And now it's down what can we find
to put there in its place? A coloured print
of our own children and their wedding days?
Or something from our holiday in Wales?
Or shall we leave the nail for next year's calendar?

EDWARD STOREY