

The Garden Was Overgrown Now

*'The normal occupation of man is war and gardening'**

This was the Western Front.
An incongruous place
To plant cornflowers, Sweet Williams and Forget-me-nots.
Pots made from spent artillery shells,
Contriving normality in the midst of madness.
Small pleasures must correct great tragedies,
Was there a greater tragedy than this?
What meant for King and Country?
It meant perhaps for Life, for Peace and a Future,
An enterprise of survival,
A defence of sanity.
A demonstration of psychological defiance,
Here it lay with the vegetables-
Celery grown in trench bottoms
In earth and mud rich with human manure and darkness.
Fish, blood and bone, without the fish,
Here in abundance the cycle of life-
Birth, growth, maturity and death.
In the trenches, the garden was overgrown now.

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** Attributed to Winston Churchill*