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MOTH HALL MUSEUM, LADYSMITH

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Abstract

In the vast barroom below, pool upon pool of baize stands uncontested as, on a fissured white wall, a small television roars out the latest Bok ambush of foreign raiders.

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MOTH HALL MUSEUM, LADYSMITH

In the vast barroom below,
pool upon pool of baize
stands uncontested
as, on a fissured white wall,
a small television roars
out the latest Bok
ambush of foreign raiders.
English shouts echo
back from the bar at the massed
volume from the screen's crowd,
Lion cans punched through air
with each break-out to the try-line.
Quietly to the side, an overalled
oil-stained mechanic, thin
cheekbones through deep tan,
sings the good life
far from Dagenham beginnings:
'There's a lot of Essex here.'
The museum's hollow room
up a dark staircase
stands padlocked and silent.
Amongst its cuttings, bandages,
bones and shrapnel from the siege,
photos of British regiments
in their transient splendour,
World War uniforms
where polished medals glint
as the lights go proudly on:
the white faces of young
soldiers stare from behind
encircling glass, alert for
what might arrive from beyond
the camera's reflecting lens.