Exposure

Our brains ache, in the merciless iced winds that ________
us …

_______ we keep awake because the night is silent …
Low, drooping flares _________ our memory of the salient …
_________ by silence, sentries __________, curious, nervous,
But nothing happens.

________________, we ________ the mad gusts ___________ on the wire,
Like ____________ agonies of men among its brambles.
Northward, incessantly, the flickering gunnery ______________.
Far off, like a dull rumour of some other war.

What are we _____ here?

The poignant misery of dawn begins to _______ …
We only know war ______, rain _____, and clouds ________ stormy.
Dawn __________ in the east her melancholy army
_________ once more in ranks on shivering ranks of gray,
But nothing happens.

Sudden successive flights of bullets ________ the silence.
Less deathly than the air that __________ black with snow,
With sidelong flowing flakes that flock, ________, and renew;
We watch them ___________ up and down the wind’s
nonchalance,
But nothing happens.
Pale flakes with fingering stealth come ________ for our
   faces-
We ________ in holes, back on forgotten dreams, and ________,
   snow-dazed,
Deep into grassier ditches. So we ________, sun-dozed,
   ________ with blossoms ________ where the blackbird fusses,
   -Is it that we are dying?

Slowly our ghosts ________ home: ________ the sunk fires,
   glozed
With crusted dark-red jewels; crickets ________ there;
For hours the innocent mice rejoice: the house is theirs:
Shutters and doors, all closed: on us the doors are ________,-
   We turn back to our dying.

Since we ________ not otherwise can kind fires ________;
Nor ever suns smile true on child, or field, or fruit.
For God’s invincible spring our love is made afraid;
Therefore, not loath, we ______ out here; therefore were born,
   For love of God seems dying.

To-night, this frost will ________ on this mud and us,
   ________ many hands, ________ foreheads crisp.
The burying-party, picks and shovels in shaking grasp,
Pause over half-known faces. All their eyes are ice,
   But nothing happens.
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