Drowning in Wheat

By John Kinsella

They’d been warned on every farm that playing in the silos would lead to death. You sink in wheat. Slowly. And the more you struggle the worse it gets. ‘You’ll see a rat sail past your face, nimble on its turf, and then you’ll disappear.’ In there, hard work has no reward. So it became a kind of test to see how far they could sink without needing a rope to help them out. But in the midst of play rituals miss a beat—like both leaping in to resolve an argument as to who’d go first and forgetting to attach the rope. Up to the waist and afraid to move. That even a call for help would see the wheat trickle down. The painful consolidation of time. The grains in the hourglass grotesquely swollen. And that acrid chemical smell of treated wheat coaxing them into a near-dead sleep.
