

The farmer remembers the Somme

Vance Palmer (1920)

*Will they never fade or pass!
The mud, and the misty figures endlessly coming
In file through the foul morass,
And the grey flood-water ripping the reeds and grass,
And the steel wings drumming.
The hills are bright in the sun:
There's nothing changed or marred in the well-known places;
When work for the day is done
There's talk, and quiet laughter, and gleams of fun
On the old folks' faces.
I have returned to these:
The farm, and the kindly Bush, and the young calves lowing;
But all that my mind sees
Is a quaking bog in a mist — stark, mapped trees,
And the dark Somme flowing.*