**James Hugh Smythe 1882 – 1962  
10th Battalion AIF (September 1914 to November 1918)**

Text, letter

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THE CORPSE

We carried him darkly at dead of night,  
A soldiers coat his only quilt.  
And prayed the moon stayed out of sight,  
Till we’d got through the muddy squelch.

We didn’t want a lantern’s glow  
To light us at our eerie work;  
The trench that we were going through  
Was always safest in the dark.  
  
No word we spoke beneath our breath,  
No requiem we sang.  
For folk whose neighbours are with death  
Put guards upon their tongue.  
  
In silence, then, we crept along  
And by the gates of hell,  
While all around the air was thronged   
with screaming shots and shells.  
  
At length we reached the place of rest  
And eased down the stretcher  
Because, sent for one to do his best -   
The regimental butcher  
  
The body we’d brought so far, you see,  
And had led us such a dance  
Was taken from a woman’s yard ---  
A pig we stole somewhere in France