

In Peshurst Village Church

In Peshurst Church sit the 51
Whose scarce-remembered names
Once carved in stone are now in here in glass.

There were many men who from villages went
To France to fight, whose lives have all been spent
Dismembered there these 100 years, victims of inglorious events.

This church is like any other – you can enter in
And feel in the rising vaults
The masons' skills, the pleasure in their work.

But here there is a feeling of another presence,
From whence it comes this growing force ?

Heavenward eyes
Scan down
Past windows,
Columns,
Pulpit,
Choir
And come to unsettled rest
On glass shapes
Propped in pews,
Glass bodies,
Close,
Now far away,
And you can see in those flattened, featureless faces, all blown away,
The Somme, and all other battles past and yet to come.

Light catches on the outline of a shoulder, a rounded head
The hard outlines of comrades long since dead -
A silent congregation of ghosts in glass, blood all bled.

In Peshurst Church do sit these 51.
From where or what in Heaven comes this that has been done ?
I am moved, deeper than mourning,
Their vigil never ending.

M. Milmo 10/11/16