

One Sunday in Picardy

Volume One, Creative Work

Eleanor Christine Ahern

The first of two volumes of a thesis submitted in  
fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy, Creative Writing

Discipline of English and Creative Writing

School of Humanities

University of Adelaide

27 April 2016

**Contents**

Contents .....	2
Abstract .....	3
Declaration.....	4
Acknowledgements.....	5
Part One .....	6
Part Two.....	59
Part Three.....	181
Works Cited .....	195
Author's Note .....	195

**Abstract**

“One Sunday in Picardy” is a work of fiction set in northern France during The First World War. Jack, an Australian doctor, returns to see his young fiancée Georgette in a French village on his way to the second Battle of the Somme. After assisting the wounded at the front for two years, he is unable to remember events during one fierce battle for which he was decorated; his thoughts are plagued by images and sensations related to the battlefield. Georgette, now nearly eighteen, finds Jack changed and is uneasy as the likelihood grows of an enemy attack, threatening the *château* which is her family home. To keep up the battalion’s spirits, Solaine, the matriarch of the family, hosts a sports day in the grounds and a grand dinner in the evening for the officers. Jack’s batman Pat, a childhood friend who is interested in Georgette’s sister Élise, goes to check on his brother Tom in the woods near the front. At the same time the body of the ace pilot Manfred von Richthofen, shot down nearby, is secretly brought to the *château* to be washed. The stories of these characters unfold as the bombardment builds up around them.

### **Declaration**

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying, subject to the provision of the Copyright Act 1968. I also give permission for the digital version of my thesis to be made available on the web, via the University's digital research repository, the Library catalogue and also through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the University to restrict access for a period of time.

The University has placed an embargo on my electronic and printed thesis for a period of twenty-four months, with effect from the date of submission.

Eleanor Ahern

27 April 2016

### **Acknowledgements**

I am indebted to my main supervisor, Professor Brian Castro, Chair of Creative Writing at the University of Adelaide, and my co-supervisor, Dr Philip Butterss.

For sharing the family history, I am grateful to my brothers, John and Robert, and Helen Beard; my mother Chris Jolly; Agnès, Jacqueline, Christian and Patrick Raquet; and Catherine and Bénédicte Valencourt.

During my research I received assistance from many others at the University, especially Dr Heather Kerr, Jennifer Liston, Dr Madeleine Seys and Camille Roulière, English and Creative Writing; Jennifer Osborn, Barr Smith Library; and Andrew Cook, Archives. I also appreciate the contribution of Andrew Rule and Jenny Antenucci.

I thank my partner, Michael, and children Katie and Ben, for their loving support, and my grandparents Jack and Andrée and my father Roland, to whom the story belongs.