

Slim

"Sweeney"

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It was somewhere in September and the sun was goin'
down
When I came in search of copy, to a Darling River town
Come-And-Have-A-Drink we'll call it, 'tis a fitting name I
think
And 'twas raining, for a wonder, up at Come-And-Have-
A-Drink

Underneath the pub verandah I was resting on a bunk
When a stranger rose before me, and he said that he
was drunk
He apologised for speaking, there was no offence he
swore
But he somehow seemed to fancy that he'd seen my
face before
He agreed you can't remember all the chaps you
chance to meet
And he said his name was Sweeney, people lived in
Sussex Street

He was camping in a stable, that he swore that he was
right
Only for the blanky horses walkin' over him all night
He'd apparently been fighting, for his face was black
and blue
And it looked as though the horses had been treading
on him too

But an honest genial twinkle in the eye that wasn't hurt
Seemed to hint of something better, spite of drink and
rags and dirt
He was born in Parramatta and he said with humour
grim
That he'd like to see the city, 'ere the liquor finished
him
But he couldn't raise the money, he was damned if he
could think
What the Government was doing here, he offered me a
drink

I declined, 'twas self-denial and I lectured him on

booze

Using all the hackneyed arguments that preachers
mostly use

Things I'd heard in temperance lectures, I was young
and rather green

And I ended by referring to the man he might have
been

But he couldn't stay to argue, for his beer was nearly
gone

He was glad, he said, to meet me, and he'd see me
later on

But he guessed he'd have to go and get his bottle filled
again

And he gave a lurch and vanished in the darkness and
the rain

Now of afternoons in cities, when the rain is on the land
Visions come to me of Sweeney, with his bottle in his
hand.

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