

Talking Vietnam Potluck Blues

Tom Paxton

"Ahhh...
Let's do that again
Do you believe that?"

Well, when I landed in Vietnam
I hardly got to see Saigon
They shaped us up and called the roll
and off we went on a long patrol
Swappin' lies, swattin' flies,
Firin' the odd shot here and there

The Captain called a halt that night
And we had chow by the pale moon light
A lovely dinner they'd planned for us
With a taste like a seat on a crosstown bus
Some of the veterans just left theirs layin' in the can
For the Viet Cong to find
Deadlier than a land mine
HMMMMM...

Naturally somebody told a joke
And a couple of the fellows began to smoke
I took a whiff as the a cloud rolled by
And my nose went up like an infield fly
The Captain, this blonde fellow from Yale looked at
me and said "What's a matter wit chu, baby?" [ghetto dialect]

Well I may be crazy, but I think not;
I swear to God that I smell pot!
But who'd have pot in Vietnam?
He said, "Whaddaya think you been sittin' on?"
These funny little plants...
Thousands of 'em.
Good God Almighty!
Pastures of plenty!

So we all lit up and by and by
The whole platoon was flyin' high
With a beautiful smile on the Captain's face
He smelled like midnight on St. Mark's Place
Cleanin' his weapon,
Chantin' sumpin' about Hari Krishna, Hari Krishna

The moment came,
As it comes to all
When I had to answer nature's call
I was stumbling around in a beautiful haze
When I met a little cat in black pj's
Rifle; ammo belt; BF Goodrich sandals
He looked up at me and said "What's a matter wit chu, baby?"
[sounding just like the Captain had]

He said we're campin' down the pass
And smelled you people blowin' grass
And since, by the smell, you're smoking trash
I brought you a taste of a special stash
Straight from Uncle Ho's victory garden

We call it Hanoi Gold.

So his squad and my squad settled down
Passin' lovely stuff around
All too soon it was time to go
The Captain got on the radio
Said "Hello headquarters?, Helloo, ahh, Headquarters?
We have met the enemy and he has been smashed!"