

No Man's Land

Slim Dusty

Well how do you do Private William McBride?
Do you mind if I sit here down by your graveside?
I'll rest for awhile in the warm summer sun
Been walkin' all day mate, and I'm nearly done

And I see by your gravestone, you were only nineteen
When you joined the fallen in 1916
Well I hope you died quick, and I hope you died clean
Or Willie McBride, was it slow and obscene?

Did they beat the drums slowly?
Did they sound the fife lowly?
Did the rifles fire o'er ye over as they lowered you down?
Did the bugles sing 'The Last Post' in chorus?
Did the pipes play 'The Flowers Of The Forest'?

Did you leave a wife or a sweetheart behind?
In some faithful heart is your memory enshrined?
And though you died back in 1916
To that loyal heart are you always nineteen?

Or are you a stranger without a name?
Forever enshrined behind some glass pane
In an old photograph, torn and tattered, and stained
And fading to yellow in a brown leather frame

Did they beat the drums slowly?
Did they sound the fife lowly?
Did the rifles fire o'er ye over as they lowered you down?
Did the bugles sing 'The Last Post' in chorus?
Did the pipes play 'The Flowers Of The Forest'?

And the sun's shining now on these green fields of France
The warm wind blows gently, and the red poppies dance
The trenches have vanished long under the plough
No gas and no barbed wire, no guns firing now

But here in this graveyard it's still no man's land
The countless white crosses, in mute witness stand
To man's blind indifference to his fellow man
And a whole generation who were butchered and damned

Did they beat the drums slowly?
Did they sound the fife lowly?
Did the rifles fire o'er ye over as they lowered you down?
Did the bugles sing 'The Last Post' in chorus?
Did the pipes play 'The Flowers Of The Forest'?

And I can't help but wonder now Willie McBride
Do all those who lie here know why they died?
Did you really believe when they told you the cause?
Did you really believe that this war would end wars?

Well the suffering, the sorrow, the glory, the shame
The killing, the dying was all done in vain
For Willie McBride it's all happened again
And again, and again, and again, and again

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