

And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda

The Dubliners

When I was a young man I carried me pack
And I lived the free life of the rover.
From the Murray's green basin to the dusty outback,
I waltzed my Matilda all over.

Then in 1915, me country said, "Son,
It's time you stop ramblin', there's work to be done."
So they gave me a tin hat, and they gave me a gun,
And they sent me away to the war.

And the band played "Waltzing Matilda"
As the ship pulled away from the quay,
And amid all the cheers, flag wavin', and tears,
We sailed off for Gallipoli.

Oh it's well I remember that terrible day,
When our blood stained the sand and the water;
And how in the hell they call Suvla Bay
We were butchered like lambs at the slaughter.

Johnny Turk, he was ready, he primed himself well;
He rained us with bullets, and he showered us with shell
And in five minutes flat, we were all blown to hell,
He nearly blew us back home to Australia.

And the band played "Waltzing Matilda"
When we stopped to bury our slain,
Well, we buried ours, and the Turks buried theirs,
Then it started all over again.

Oh those that were living just tried to survive
In that mad world of blood, death and fire.
And for ten weary weeks I kept myself alive
While around me the corpses piled higher.

Then a big Turkish shell knocked me arse over head,
And when I awoke up in me hospital bed
And saw what it had done, I wished I was dead;
I never knew there was a worse thing than dying.

For no more I'll go waltzing Matilda;
All around the green bush far and near
For to hump tent and pegs, a man needs both legs,
No more waltzing Matilda for me.

They collected the wounded, the crippled, the maimed,
And they shipped us back home to Australia.
The armless, the legless, the blind, and the insane,
Those proud wounded heroes of Suvla.

And when the ship pulled into Circular Quay,
I looked at the place where me legs used to be,
And thanked Christ there was no one there waiting for me,
To grieve, and to mourn, and to pity.

And the band played "Waltzing Matilda"
When they carried us down the gangway,

Oh nobody cheered, they just stood and stared,
Then they turned all their faces away.

Oh now every April, I sit on my porch
And I watch the parade pass before me.
I see my old comrades, how proudly they march,
Renewing their dreams of past glories,

I see the old men march all tired, stiff, and worn,
Those weary old heroes of a forgotten war
And the young people ask "What are they marching for?"
And I ask myself the same question.

And the band plays "Waltzing Matilda"
And the old men still answer the call,
But year after year, their numbers get fewer
Someday, no one will march there at all.

Waltzing Matilda, waltzing Matilda.
Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me?
And their ghosts may be heard as they march by the billabong,
So who'll come a-Waltzing Matilda with me?