

Ira Hayes

Townes Van Zandt

Gather round me people and a story I will tell
About a brave young Indian you should remember well
From the tribe of Pima Indians, a proud and a peaceful band
They farmed the Phoenix Valley in Arizona land

Down their ditches for a thousand years the sparkling water rushed
Till the white man stole their water rights and the running
water hushed
Now Ira's folks were hungry and their farms were
crops of weeds
But when war came he volunteered and forgot, the
white man's greed

Call him, Drunken Ira Hayes, he won't answer anymore
Not the whiskey-drinking Indian or the marine who went to war
Yes, call him, Drunken Ira Hayes, he won't answer anymore
Not the whiskey-drinking Indian or the marine who went to war

They started up Iwo Jima Hill, 250 men
But only 27 lived to walk back down that hill again
And when the fight was over and the old glory raised
One of the men who held it high was the Indian
Ira Hayes

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Now Ira returned a hero, celebrated throughout the land
He was wine and specked and honored, everybody shook his hand
But he was just a Pima Indian, no money, no crops, no chance
And at home nobody cared what Ira had done and the wind did the Indian's dance

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And Ira started drinking hard, jail was often his home
They let him raise the flag there and lower it like you'd throw a dog a bone
He died drunk early one morning, alone in the land he had fought to save
Two inches of water in a lonely ditch was the grave for Ira Hayes

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Call him, Drunken Ira Hayes, he won't answer anymore
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Yes, call him, Drunken Ira Hayes, but his land is still as dry
And his ghost is lying thirsty in the ditch where Ira died

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