

The Green Fields of France

Well how do you do, Private William McBride
Do you mind if I sit here down by your grave side?
A rest for awhile in the warm summer sun,
I've been walking all day and I'm nearly done.
And I see by your gravestone that you were only 19
when you joined the glorious fallen in 1916.
And I hope you died quick and I hope you died clean
Or, William McBride, was it slow and obscene?

CHORUS:

Did they beat the drum slowly?
did they sound the pipes lowly?
Did the rifles fire o'er ye as they lowered you down?
Did the bugle sing 'The Last Post' in chorus?
Did the pipes play 'The Flowers o' the Forest'?

And did you leave a wife or a sweetheart behind?
In some loyal heart is your memory enshrined
And though you died back in 1916
To that faithful heart are you always 19.
Or are you just a stranger without even a name
Forever enclosed behind some glass-pane
In an old photograph torn and tattered and stained
And fading to yellow in a brown leather frame?

Well the sun it shines down on these green fields of France,
The warm wind blows gently and the red poppies dance.
The trenches are vanished now under the plough
No gas, no barbed wire, no guns firing now.
But here in this graveyard it is still No Man's Land
And the countless white crosses in mute witness stand.
To man's blind indifference to his fellow man
And a whole generation that was butchered and downed.

And I can't help but wonder now Willie McBride
Do all those who lie here know why they died?
Did you really believe them when they told you the cause?
Did you really believe them that this war would end war?
But the suffering, the sorrow, some the glory, the shame -
The killing and dying - it was all done in vain.
For Willie McBride, it's all happened again
And again, and again, and again, and again.

Did they beat the drum slowly?
did they sound the pipe lowly?
Did the rifles fire o'er ye as they lowered you down?
Did the bugle sing 'The Last Post' in chorus?
Did the pipes play 'The Flowers o' the Forest'?