

Willie McBride (Green Fields of France)

Eric Bogle

Well how do you do young Willie McBride,
Do you mind if I sit here down by your graveside,
And rest for a while in the warm summer sun,
I've been walking all day and I'm nearly done.
I see by your gravestone you were only nineteen,
When you joined the great fallen in nineteen sixteen,
Well I hope you died quick and I hope you died clean,
Or Willie McBride was it slow and obscene.

[Chorus]

Did they beat the drum slowly,
Did they play the fife lowly,
Did they sound the death march, as they lowered you down,
Did the band play the Last Post in chorus,
Did the pipes play the Flowers of 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 nineteen sixteen,
To that loyal heart you're forever nineteen.

C Am F Dm
Or are you a stranger without even a name,
G F G
Forever enshrined behind some old glass pane,
C Am Dm
In an old photograph all torn tattered and stained,
G F C
And faded to yellow in a brown leather frame.

[Chorus]

G
Did they beat the drum slowly,
F C
Did they play the fife lowly,
G F G
Did they sound the death march, as they lowered you down,
F Dm C Am
Did the band play the Last Post in chorus,
C F G C
Did the pipes play the Flowers of the Forest.

C Am F Dm
The sun's shining down on these green fields of France,
G F C
The warm wind blows gently and the red poppies dance,
C Am F Dm
The trenches have vanished long under the plow
G F C
No gas, no barbed wire, no guns firing now.
C Am F Dm
But here in this graveyard it's still "No Man's Land",
G F G
The countless white crosses in mute witness stand,
C Am Dm
To man's blind indifference to his fellow man,
G F C
And a whole generation that were butchered and damned.

[Chorus]

 G
Did they beat the drum slowly,
 F C
Did they play the fife lowly,
 G F G
Did they sound the death march, as they lowered you down,
 F Dm C Am
Did the band play the Last Post in chorus,
 C F G C
Did the pipes play the Flowers of the Forest.

 C Am F Dm
And I can't help but wonder, oh Willie McBride
 G F C
Do all those who lie here know why they died,
 C Am F Dm
Did you really believe them when they told you the cause
 G F C
Did they really believe that this war would end wars.
 C Am F Dm
Well, the suffering, the sorrow, the glory, the shame
 G F G
The killing and dying it was all done in vain,
 C Am Dm
Oh Willie McBride it all happened again,
 G F C
And again, and again, and again, and again.

[Chorus]

 G
Did they beat the drum slowly,
 F C
Did they play the fife lowly,
 G F G
Did they sound the death march, as they lowered you down,
 F Dm C Am
Did the band play the Last Post in chorus,
 C F G C
Did the pipes play the Flowers of the Forest.