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Willie McBride's Reply

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(Lyrics: Stephen L. Suffet (Copyright 1997)

Tune: "No Man's Land" by Eric Bogle

My dear friend Eric, this is Willie McBride,
Today I speak to you across the divide,
Of years and of distance of life and of death,
Please let me speak freely with my silent breath.

You might think me crazy, you might think me daft,
I could have stayed back in Erin, where there wasn't a draft,
But my parents they raised me to tell right from wrong,
So today I shall answer what you asked in your song.

Yes, they beat the drum slowly, they played the pipes lowly,
And the rifles fired o'er me as they lowered me down,
The band played "The Last Post" in chorus,
And the pipes played "The Flowers of the Forest."

Ask the people of Belgium or Alsace-Lorraine,
If my life was wasted, if I died in vain.
I think they will tell you when all's said and done,
They welcomed this boy with his tin hat and gun.

And call it ironic that I was cut down,
While in Dublin my kinfolk were fighting the Crown.
But in Dublin or Flanders the cause was the same:
To resist the oppressor, whatever his name.

Yes, they beat the drum slowly... etc.

It wasn't for King or for England I died,
It wasn't for glory or the Empire's pride.
The reason I went was both simple and clear:
To stand up for freedom did I volunteer.

It's easy for you to look back and sigh,
And pity the youth of those days long gone by,
For us who were there, we knew why we died,
And I'd do it again, says Willie McBride.

Yes, they beat the drum slowly...etc.

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