

Towton's Creek

Tune plus some lyrics of *Green Fields of France* © 1976 Eric Bogle

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first sung at Æthelmearc's Sylvan Bardic Competition A.S. LIV

“Lyt Chware”

Well, how do you, young William Blythe?
Do you mind if I sit here upon your hillside
And rest for a while ‘neath the warm summer sun?
I’ve been walking all day, and I’m nearly done.

I hear from the stories you were but a lad,
Sixteen short summers were all that you had.
Well, I hope your last breath was full,
sweet, and clean.
Oh William Blythe, was it so obscene?

chorus (after every two verses)

Did they beat the drum slowly?
Did they play the fife lowly?
Did your family know that they lowered you down?
Did a priest say the Lord’s Prayer above you?
Did your village cry for their love of you?

Did you leave ‘ere a wife or a sweetheart behind?
In that faithful heart, is your memory enshrined?
And though you died back near ten years before,
Does the thought of your smile still make them want more?

Or are you a stranger without even a name,
Lost and forgotten with just time to blame?
Carved into letters at the base of this cross,
A date worn and weathered and covered in moss.

The sun, how it shines on this field and my skin,
The small bluebells dance in the warm summer wind.
No blood in the meadow, the cow creek flows clean,
No arrows, no swords, no dying screams.

In the sons and the fathers that lay by your side,
This silent stone cross will never show pride.
‘Twas by our blind indifference to our fellow man
That a whole generation was butchered and damned.

Now I can’t help but wonder, poor William Blythe,
Was the crown you fought for worth all of these lives?
Did they really believe that the fighting would cease?
Did they really believe when their Duke promised peace?

For the sorrow, the suffering, the glory, the shame,
The killing and dying was all done in vain.
For, William Blythe, it all happened again,
And again, and again, and again and again.

Will they beat the drum slowly? Will they play the fife lowly?
Will I be the last soldier they put in the ground?
Tell me: why did they ever decide
That we win when enough of the others have died?

Oh, how do you do, young William Blythe?
Do you mind if they lay me at your side?