

**"No Man's Land"**  
**Eric Bogle**  
**(Scraps of Paper - 1981)**

Well, how'd you do, Private Willie McBride,  
D'you mind if I sit down down here by your graveside?  
I'll rest for awhile in the warm summer sun,  
Been walking all day, Lord, and I'm nearly done.  
I see by your gravestone you were only nineteen  
When you joined the glorious fallen in 1916,  
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 sound the fife lowly?  
Did the rifles fire o'er ye as they lowered ye down?  
Did the bugles sing "The Last Post" in chorus?  
Did the pipes play the "Floors O' The Forest"?  
And did you leave a wife or a sweetheart behind  
In some faithful heart is your memory enshrined?  
And, though you died back in 1916,  
To that loyal heart are you forever nineteen?  
Or are you a stranger, without even a name,  
Forever enshrined 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's shining down on these green fields of France;  
The warm wind blows gently, the red poppies dance.  
The trenches have vanished long under the plow;  
No gas and no barbed wire, no guns firing now.  
But here in this graveyard it's still No Man's Land;  
The countless white crosses in mute witness stand  
To man's blind indifference to his fellow man.  
And a whole generation who were butchered and damned.

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 that this war would end wars?  
Well the suffering, the sorrow, the glory, the shame,  
The killing, the dying, it was all done in vain,  
For Willie McBride, it's all happened again,  
And again, and again, and again, and again.