

When Margaret Was Eleven

The Dubliners

My father said farewell and the band played tunes of glory
A giant man with ribbons, bedeviled dignity
A regimental sergeant, the backbone of the Empire
For God and righteous glory bound for High Germany

Sweet Lord, I was just seven when Margaret was eleven
They served us war for breakfast and soldiers' songs for tea
"Your father's gone campaigning" was a way of not explaining
That soldiers are the living proof of our inhumanity

My childhood passed away midst the tales and lurid stories
Of manufactured glories and inhuman gallantry
I asked, "When is war over?", but no one deemed to answer me
And Margaret played that dreaded tune called High Germany

Sweet Lord, I was just seven when Margaret was eleven
They served us war for breakfast and soldiers' songs for tea
"Your father's gone campaigning" was a way of not explaining
That soldiers are the living proof of our inhumanity

My father made it home, but he came without his reason
Two eyes of molten madness, a senseless fool of war
"He's just a child," my mother cried, "to be dressed in full regalia
And paraded as a hero home from High Germany"

Sweet Lord, I was just seven when Margaret was eleven
They served us war for breakfast and soldiers' songs for tea
"Your father's gone campaigning" was a way of not explaining
That soldiers are the living proof of our inhumanity

There'll be no tunes of glory for Margaret and me