

Fortunes Of War

Fish

Rosebuds scattered across the lawn like the squares at Waterloo
With bayonets of thorns repelling small children in search of lost tennis balls
Imaginary cannonballs that were fired at the legs of galloping cavalry
Resting their dreams in the shade of the apple trees
Toy soldiers drunk on warm lemonade
And the children dream of glory and Fortunes of War
Safe in bed with stories of Fortunes of War, Fortunes of War

As the sun sets low on these playing fields
An army returns bearing swords and shields
Dustbin lids and raspberry canes they'll live to fight another day
For warriors medals, milk bottle tops
Battle flags fashioned from mother's old table cloths
Bright colours run in the summer rain

Sometimes when they fall they will pretend that their hankie is
a bandage to stop the bleeding
And imagine city streets and desert storms and foreign fields
There's bullets flying, these are the Fortunes of War

I heard a wheelchair whisper across a stale, stagnant gymnasium
Trailing an ivy league jacket like a matador
Through the jitterbug steps of the night before
I followed him down to the church parade
Where he makes his peace every armistice day
I watched him fade away, melt in the autumn rain

For sometimes when they fall they can't pretend
That the hankie is a bandage that can't stop the bleeding
They're out in city streets and desert storms or foreign fields
With bullets flying, these are the Fortunes of War
While their children dream of glory and Fortunes of War
Safe in bed with stories and Fortunes of War
Of uniforms and glory, Fortunes of War, Fortunes of War