

# Where Are You Now, My Son?

Joan Baez

It's walking to the battleground that always makes me cry  
I've met so few folks in my time who weren't afraid to die  
But dawn bleeds with the people here and morning skies are red  
As young girls load up bicycles with flowers for the dead

An aging woman picks along the craters and the rubble  
A piece of cloth, a bit of shoe, a whole lifetime of trouble  
A sobbing chant comes from her throat and splits the morning air  
The single son she had last night is buried under her

They say that the war is done  
Where are you now, my son?

An old man with unsteady gait and beard of ancient white  
Bent to the ground with arms outstretched faltering in his plight  
I took his hand to steady him, he stood and did not turn  
But smiled and wept and bowed and mumbled softly, "Danke shoen"

The children on the roadsides of the villages and towns  
Would stand around us laughing as we stood like giant clowns  
The mourning bands told whom they'd lost by last night's phantom messenger  
And they spoke their only words in English, "Johnson, Nixon, Kissinger"

Now that the war's being won  
Where are you now, my son?

The siren gives a running break to those who live in town  
Take the children and the blankets to the concrete underground  
Sometimes we'd sing and joke and paint bright pictures on the wall  
And wonder if we would die well and if we'd loved at all

The helmetless defiant ones sit on the curb and stare  
At tracers flashing through the sky and planes bursting in air  
But way out in the villages no warning comes before a blast  
That means a sleeping child will never make it to the door

The days of our youth were fun  
Where are you now, my son?

From the distant cabins in the sky where no man hears the sound  
Of death on earth from his own bombs, six pilots were shot down  
Next day six hulking bandaged men were dazzled by a room  
Of newsmen. Sally keep the faith, let's hope this war ends soon

In a damaged prison camp where they no longer had command  
They shook their heads, what irony, we thought peace was at hand  
The preacher read a Christmas prayer and the men knelt on the ground  
Then sheepishly asked me to sing "They Drove Old Dixie Down"

Yours was the righteous gun  
Where are you now, my son?

We gathered in the lobby celebrating Christmas Eve  
The French, the Poles, the Indians, Cubans and Vietnamese  
The tiny tree our host had fixed sweetened familiar psalms  
But the most sacred of Christmas prayers was shattered by the bombs

So back into the shelter where two lovely women rose  
And with a brilliance and a fierceness and a gentleness which froze  
The rest of us to silence as their voices soared with joy  
Outshining every bomb that fell that night upon Hanoi

With bravery we have sun  
But where are you now, my son?

Oh people of the shelters what a gift you've given me  
To smile at me and quietly let me share your agony  
And I can only bow in utter humbleness and ask  
Forgiveness and forgiveness for the things we've brought to pass

The black pyjama'd culture that we tried to kill with pellet holes  
And rows of tiny coffins we've paid for with our souls  
Have built a spirit seldom seen in women and in men  
And the white flower of Bac Mai will surely blossom once again

I've heard that the war is done  
Then where are you now, my son?