

# The Beat of Black Wings

Joni Mitchell

I met a young soldier  
He said his name was Killer Kyle  
He was shakin' all over  
Like a night-frightened child  
This is his story  
It's a tough one for me to sing  
Hard as the squawk and the flap  
And the beat of--the beat of black wings

"They gave me a gun," he said  
"They gave me a mission  
For the power and the glory--  
Propaganda--piss on 'em  
There's a war zone inside me--  
I can feel things exploding--  
I can't even hear the fucking music playing  
For the beat of--the beat of black wings."

He said, "I never had nothin'--  
Nothin' I could believe in  
My girl killed our unborn child  
Without even grievin'!  
I put my hands on her belly  
To feel the kid kickin'--damn!  
She'd been to some clinic  
Oh--the beat of black wings."

"They want you--they need you--  
They train you to kill--  
To be a pin on some map--  
Some vicarious thrill--  
The old hate the young  
That's the whole heartless thing  
The old pick the wars  
We die in 'em  
To the beat of--the beat of black wings."

There's a man drawing pictures  
On the sidewalk with chalk  
Just as fast as he draws 'em  
Rain come down and wash 'em off  
"Keep the drinks comin' girl  
'Til I can't feel anything  
I'm just a chalk mark in a rainstorm  
I'm just the beat of black wings."