

Woods of Darney

Richard Thompson

I found your picture in a corporal's pocket
His cold fingers still pressed it to his chest
Sniper's bullet took his eyes and his breath away
Now he lies out in the forest with the rest

You looked shy in your grandmother's wedding dress
Feet set wide like a farm girl stands
Too young to love and too young to lose
In a cracked picture frame in a dead man's hands

I kept it with me for the luck, for the magic
Maybe fate wouldn't strike in the same place twice
But something stirred and I dared to dream of you
And I knew I'd look for you if I should survive

When we stood down at last it was easy to find you
And mine was the shoulder you cried on that day
Just an old comrade doing his duty
Bringing the news from the woods of Darney

When I showed you the picture, perhaps I felt jealousy
As your tears welled up with each reminiscence
And my hands may be rougher and my tongue may be
coarser
But I knew I could give you a love good as his

Now we lie in the darkness together
Often we lie without speaking this way
As you stare in the dark do you see your young corporal
Who never came back from the woods of Darney

Is it him that you see when we make love together?
Is it him that you see when war fills the sky?
Was he there as you stood in your grandmother's wedding
dress
As we made our own vows, you and I?

Now the bugle calls, they say this is the big one
A curse on the life of a soldier, you say
But don't you know that's a soldier's small comfort
For the bugle to sound, and to hear, and obey

And I'll carry your picture, the one that he carried
I'll wear your innocence and take my chance
On a frozen field, in a far-flung war
To win back what we lost in a field in France

And it's many a soldier who goes into battle
Your corporal and I, we just hear and obey
Perhaps we'll lie in the darkness together
With your love to bind us, in the woods of Darney