

Black 47

"Vinegar Hill"

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The sun was settin' the rocks on fire
The fields blisterin' with the heat
When the militia came marchin' through our town
Knockin' sparks off the little streets
The priest watched them from his front door
The sweat sparklin' on his skin
When they burned his little chapel down
He grabbed his missal and his gun
I must go down to Wexford town
Where the lightnin cracks the air
And the people sing of freedom
They've banished all despair
The coward dies a million times
The freeman dies just once
So here's to you revolution
May your flame keep burnin' 'til
We meet our Armageddon
Up high on Vinegar Hill
The priest's name was Citizen Murphy
I didn't like him much
He didn't believe in the rights of man
Just the power of the Catholic Church
But I never saw a man as brave
I'd follow him to hell
Or to death in Enniscorthy
On that godforsaken hill
Fr. Murphy:
"I get down on my knees everyday
And I pray to my God
But his face he has turned away
From his people
I have racked my brains for a compromise
But to what end?
Only one question remains
Why have you deserted me, Oh Christ?
The Bishop advises that all arms must be surrendered
Leaving ourselves defenseless
Against His Majesty and His royal plunderers
But if the Bishop be a pawn
I must ask myself whether it is better
To die like a dog in a ditch
Or rise up with my people - the poor against the rich?"

I return to my prayers
And reflect upon Your tortured lips
But not a word do I hear
Just a veil of silence around the crucifix
And I remember the Bishop's words
"When faith is gone, all hope is lost"
Well, so be it,
I will rise up with my people
And to hell with the eternal cost!"
The sun beat down on the fields of corn
The sweat was in our eyes
When we heard the militia approachin'
With their trumpets and their fifes
The priest rode by on his silver horse
The fire had cleansed his soul
He said "let's strike a blow for freedom, boys,"
Then we blew that scum right off the road
I must go down to Wexford town
Where the lightnin' cracks the air
And the people sing of freedom
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