

Harvey Andrews "The British Soldier"

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In a station in the city a British soldier stood
Talking to the people there if the people would
Some just stared in hatred, and others turned in pain
And the lonely British soldier wished he was back home
again

Come join the British Army! said the posters in his town
See the world and have your fun come serve before the
Crown
The jobs were hard to come by and he could not face
the dole
So he took his country's shilling and enlisted on the roll

For there was no fear of fighting, the Empire long was
lost
Just ten years in the army getting paid for being
bossed
Then leave a man experienced a man who's made the
grade
A medal and a pension some mem'ries and a trade

Then came the call for Ireland as the call had come
before
Another bloody chapter in an endless civil war
The priests they stood on both sides the priests they
stood behind
Another fight in Jesus's name the blind against the
blind

The soldier stood between them between the whistling
stones
And then the broken bottles that led to broken bones
The petrol bombs that burnt his hands the nails that
pierced his skin
And wished that he had stayed at home surrounded by
his kin

The station filled with people the soldier soon was
bored
But better in the station than where the people warred
The room filled up with mothers with daughters and
with sons

Who stared with itchy fingers at the soldier and his gun

A yell of fear a screech of brakes the shattering of
glass

The window of the station broke to let the package pass
A scream came from the mothers as they ran towards
the door

Dragging their children crying from the bomb upon the
floor

The soldier stood and could not move his gun he could
not use

He knew the bomb had seconds and not minutes on the
fuse

He could not run and pick it up and throw it in the street
There were far too many people there too many
running feet

Take cover! yelled the soldier, Take cover for your lives
And the Irishmen threw down their young and stood
before their wives

They turned towards the soldier their eyes alive with
fear

For God's sake save our children or they'll end their
short lives here

The soldier moved towards the bomb his stomach like
a stone

Why was this his battle God why was he alone

He lay down on the package and he murmured one
farewell

To those at home in England to those he loved so well

He saw the sights of summer felt the wind upon his
brow

The young girls in the city parks how precious were
they now

The soaring of the swallow the beauty of the swan

The music of the turning world so soon would it be
gone

A muffled soft explosion and the room began to quake
The soldier blown across the floor his blood a crimson
lake

There was no time to cry or shout there was no time to
moan

And they turned their children's faces from the blood
and from the bones

The crowd outside soon gathered and the ambulances

came

To carry off the body of a pawn lost in the game
And the crowd they clapped and cheered and they
sang their rebel song
One soldier less to interfere where he did not belong

And will the children growing up learn at their mothers'
knees

The story of the soldier who bought their liberty
Who used his youthful body as a means towards an
end

Who gave his life to those who called him murderer not
friend

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