

Casey Diemel

"Hometown Hooray"

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Down by the old stone church
Where the joe-pye weed and the mallows grow
Those petals bigger than my fist
Watch them bob and bow when the wind does blow

There grows a cypress tree
And in its trunk I carved your name
And right beside it I carved mine

They'll give you the hometown hooray
When you come home, baby
Bronze your combat boots
And set your bones in clay
Write down every word you ever had to say
No one wants to believe you died in vain

The first spring that you were gone
The women who lived on the flat roof-tops
Had sherds sewn with quickly germinating seeds of
greens

In all of their Sapphic celebrations
They held fires and dances, chanted your name
Tied yellow ribbons round the trunks of trees in town

They'll give you the hometown hooray
When you come home, baby
Bronze your combat boots
And set your bones in clay
Write down every word you ever had to say
With Homeric undertones and half the length

But the skies held a collusion of their own
And on the sunniest day there ever was
You died at the tusk of a bayonet
And Aphrodite found your body
Sprinkled nectar in your wounds
And your blood dripped red anemones
That shimmered just like precious stones

And they floated down the riverbank

To the tributary that now shares your name
And the rapids from then on ran red
They run red to this day

They'll give you the hometown hooray
When you come home, baby
Oh bronze your combat boots
And set your bones in clay
Write down every word you ever had to say
With Homeric undertones and half the length

We used to walk past the blue schoolhouse
We wore our love like it was a crown
And our skin was a map we knew by heart
We never once got lost
We never once got lost
No one wants to believe you died in vain

The Sapphic women who love you so
Still cry every spring when the fennel goes
And the wheat and the barley and the hardy rye
Wither and go to seed

I walk down to the old stone church
where the joe-pye weed and the mallows grow
Those petals droop now heavy with rain
watch them bob and bow when the wind does blow

There, my favorite cypress tree
As tall as the steeples I can see
They've tied a yellow-ribbon 'round its trunk
that covers your name where I carved it twice

I rip that ribbon off the tree
Burn it down by the river that now shares your name
Place the ash where the water ravenously licks the
riverbank

We used to walk past the blue schoolhouse
We wore our love like it was a crown
And our skin was a map I knew by heart
We never once got lost
We never once got lost
No one wants to believe you died in vain

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