

Kinky Friedman

"The Ballad Of Ira Hayes"

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Gather 'round me people
A story I will tell
About a brave young Indian lad
You should remember well

From a tribe of Pima Indians
A proud and peaceful band
They farmed the Phoenix valley
Out in Arizona land

Down their ditches for a thousand years
The sparkling water rushed
Till the white man stole their water rights
And the running water hushed

Ira's folks was hungry
Their fields grew thick with weeds
But when war came Ira volunteered
And forgot the white man's greed

Call him drunken Ira Hayes
He won't answer anymore
Not that whiskey drinking Indian
Or Marine who went to war

Well, they battled up Iwo Jima Hill
Two hundred and fifty men
But only twenty-seven lived
To walk back down again

And after the fight was over
And Old Glory proudly raised
Among the men who held her high
Stood an Indian, Ira Hayes

Call him drunken Ira Hayes
He won't answer anymore
Not that whiskey drinking Indian
Or Marine who went to war

Well, Ira Hayes returned a hero
Celebrated throughout the land

He was wined and speeched and honored
Hell, everybody shook his hand

But he was just a Pima Indian
No food, no friend, no chance
Back home nobody cared what Ira had did
And when do the Indians dance?

Well, Ira took to drinking hard
Jail often was his home
They used to let him raise the flag there
And lower it just like you'd throw a dog a bone

And Ira died drunk early one morning
All alone in the land he'd fought to save
Two inches of water in a lonely ditch
Was the grave for Ira Hayes

Call him drunken Ira Hayes
He won't answer anymore
Not that whiskey drinking Indian
Or Marine who went to war

Yeah, call him drunken Ira Hayes
But his land is still as dry
And his ghost, well, it's lying there thirsty
In the ditch where Ira died

Call him drunken Ira Hayes
He won't answer anymore
Not that whiskey drinking Indian
Or Marine who went to war

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