Oh What A Beautiful Country

WORDS BY MATT McGINN

Music: Traditional ©1967 by Matt McGinn

CHORUS:

Oh, what a beautiful country; Oh, what a beautiful country;

No land on this earth could take it's place.

I've been rambling around your country
Been rambling around your country
Been rambling around your country
Not one moment of rambling did I waste. CHO.

The Pilgrim came here to seek out heaven
He came here to seek out heaven
He came here to seek our heaven
I can still see the joy upon his face. CHO.

All of these beautiful people (3x)
Every colour and creed and every race. CHO.

Why then must you go on killing (3x)
Bring this beautiful country to disgrace.

United States First Cavalry Division (Airmobile) reported they killed 159 North Vietnamese regulars in two days of heavy fighting. American officers said they killed 159 North Vietnamese regulars in two days of heavy fighting.

Vietcong force that was 50% to 55% had lost 355 men killed near Saigon. Vietnamese forces were reported to have lost 355 men killed near Saigon.

At the same time, 1,005 North Vietnamese were reported killed, 1,005 by United States shelling. Vietcong bodies found on the battlefield appeared to be those of 13 to 15-year-old boys.

Also In This Issue: DAVE ARVIN, BOB COHEN, NORMAN ROSS, GAIL DORSEY, BILLY EDD WHEELER, PATRICK SKY, REINER ROYALD, Others.
Ballad of the Enemy

If I knew your name,
If I knew who your mother was,
I don't believe I could ever again
Answer the call to arms.

Chorus:
And I don't know, I really don't know
But that I wouldn't like you more
Than a man wearing the same uniform
Who speaks my language.

If I knew your sisters,
Played with your son,
I don't believe I could ever again
Take money to shoot you down. Cho.

If I saw your villages,
Looked into your daughter's cradle,
I don't believe I could ever again
Torture your wife. Cho.

If misunderstandings never again arise
In this strange world over a mere word,
I believe we would never again
Go to war.

In "A Guide to Protest," the introduction to his book of protest songs, "20 Ballads," Rowland writes (excerpted): "The melodies of protest songs draw on well known and beloved folk tunes for models and inspiration. The words, however, must not cater to current art fads or political ideologies; the material itself is all-important.... The American singers represent the cultural form that has strongly influenced our own have been trailblazers.... The protest should first be formulated, with information being given in fragments throughout the song. Significant comparisons may be added where they are effective.... Protest is much more persuasive when the singer clearly shows the problem's background and causes, and points out effects before the audience sees them by themselves.... Young listeners require...persuasive, unpopular and unpublished facts, presented with sincere conviction in folk or rock forms. These are the listeners with the most fanatic desire for truth, with unconventional questions and opinions, generally young workers from the large factories, who become reflective during discussions and can admit their mistakes.... To be meaningful, musical protest should be accompanied by conversation and instruction, creating a motivating crescendo. When protest attains the level of a real dialogue...people will actually start teaching it as a form in itself. The beginning of this dialogue at present offers the only chance for the powerless protest singer to move the world and its societies an inch, hopefully a little bit forward...." (From the German - Translated by Pamela Richards; Excerpted by Arthur Kevess)

This page of Broadside paid for by FOLKWAYS RECORDS, 701 7th Ave. N.Y.C.

(advt.)
2. Remember New York town, good old New York town
The friends, the drinks, the cops and all
And the whores who took your money when you
 couldn't stand
And all the roaring nights you can't recall.
Remember Alice Fay, good old Alice Fay
She'd been through life at least ten times around
And when she said she loved you, well she meant it, boy
And remember the night you nearly drowned.

Ah, but you're alone, Jimmy Clay
As you smoke your cigar and think of yesterday
Well yesterday don't matter if it's gone away
Where did it go, Jimmy Clay.

3. As you lie there in the mud who will talk to you
Nobody, Jimmy Clay
For when you're gone, mankind follows after you

Doesn't it, Jimmy Clay
And your face is growing moldy where they kissed your cheek
And said, "Please die for us, Jimmy Clay."
And so you died a soldier and a hero's death
Congratulations, Jimmy Clay.

Now you're alone, Jimmy Clay
You can smoke your cigar and earn your pay
And somewhere in the distance you can hear the fiddle play
And not one note will change, Jimmy Clay.

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Words & Music by GAIL DORSEY & EMILIE GOULD  
© 1967 Gail Dorsey & Emilie Gould

1. I am a Saigon Bar-girl, G. I. Joes are my living, And I'm on-ly good at taking when they are good at giving. But which way should I look for him? Which way should I look for them? Americans are all a-round But they all look the same to me.

2. The' some are darker than others And their eyes slant in different directions Three said they'd try to take care of me Pay well for my easy affection. CHO.

3. When I came here those boys were my answer Nights of bourbon & baseball & bets And I supported one baby easy On the money for cigarettes (no CHO.)

4. But three are a different matter The' the Daim one lives in the streets The' Fal one's learning to walk now The' Ky one's still wetting the sheets. CHO.

5. Well, I hope this war's never over And I say it with no regrets For no Vietnam man I know of Will keep me in cigarettes Last CHO:

Well I am a Saigon Bar-girl G. I. Joes are my living.- The Americans who burned my village 'Cause we all looked the same to them.

The Raw Recruits
by David Arkin
© David Arkin, 1967

This song was written in the manner of Elizakim Immer, a Jewish Wediing band of the nineteenth century. It speaks of the Poimanes, (young conscripts from the age of eight to eighteen) who were forcibly drafted into the Gar’s army, and marched off in pitiful bundles to the Caucasus and Siberia; there to be transformed out to the peasants. While detained in the barracks, juicer organised the recruits in songs of protest which helped them gain freedom.

We are the raw recruits We march with holes in our boots We march with a heavy load on the long, long road.

1. We march with rags on our back We march with stones in our pack We march in the storm and the rain We march thru rivers of pain We march thru the muck and the mud We march thru rivers of blood Over a mountain of stones And down thru a valley of bones.

2. We are the children of scorn We are the lost, the forlorn An army of orphans, we go To a world of ice & snow And we are the chosen ones Remember, we are your sons And when you are safe in your bed Remember us when we are dead.

We are the raw recruits, we march with holes in our boots We march with a heavy load on the Long, long road.

"Raw Recruits" reprinted from Songmakers' Newsletter, Los Angeles, Calif.
mohammed ali

BY MATT McGINN

I'm looking for a job with a sky-high pay,
A four-day week and a two-hour day,
S'maybe it's because I'm inclined that way
But I never did like being idle!

I don't want glory and I don't want fame,
I left the school with a modest aim,
I went to the Labour Exchange for work,
Here is what I sang to the wee broo clerk: (6c)

Now that, says he, is a rare wee song,
To come frae a lad so big and strong,
Through the door on the left and take this card:
You can sing it to the gaffer down in Harland's yard: (6c)

I sang it to the gaffer but he thought me daft,
I've never ever heard such a horse's laugh,
He gathered around him all his men,
And as one big choir, they sang then: (6c)

Their voices rang o'er the riverside,
And it became the song of the Clyde,
Its words were heard the whole world round,
And it was known as the Clydeside Sound: (6c)
THEY CAN'T PUT IT BACK

Words and Music by
BILLY EDD WHEELER

© 1966 Quartet Music, Inc.
& Bexhill Music Corp.
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SLOWLY

Down in the valley ’bout a mile from me / the crows no longer cry. There's a
great big earth-movin' monster machine, stands ten stories high. The ground he can
eat is a sight, Takes a hundred tons at a bite; He can dig up the grass, it's a
fact, But he can't put it back.

INTERLUDE

I nev-er was one to carry—signs,
walk in lines. -- May-be I'm be-hind the times.

LAST ENDING:

-- BACK. THEY CAN'T PUT IT BACK.

2. They come and tell me I gotta move, make way for that big machine
But I ain't movin' unless they kill me like they killed the fish in my stream.
Look at that big machine go,-- took that shady grove a long time to grow.
They can rip it out with one whack, -- But they can't put it back.

(Interlude)

3. You can bet your sweet life you're gonna hear it from me, I ain't gonna
take it layin' down.
I'm gettin' tired seein' rocks that bleed their guts on the ground
I ain't gonna sell my soul, so they can strip out another little tiny vein
of gold.
I ain't movin' out of my track -- 'Cause they can't put it back.
-- THEY CAN'T PUT IT BACK.

"I premiered this song in West Virginia where it was inspired, in the same amphitheatre
the following night where the Governor (Smith) launched his tough anti-strip mining bill.
(It still isn't tough enough). To dramatize his bill, he had an artist paint an eight-foot square painting of West Virginia hills, with beautiful trout streams, miners working the sides of mountains, etc. During his speech he had the artist touch off a charge which blew up the painting, sending splinters into the front rows of scurrying-for-shelter reporters. When the smoke cleared, the painting revealed decapitated mountains, with the acid, bare earth streaming into streams where dead fish floated, belly up, and the heads of the miners were blown off, but they were still working; a few streamers were flowing down with the bare earth saying JESUS SAVES, etc. Needless to say, it made national news. When I sang my song there the following night, I got a standing ovation."

Billy Edd Wheeler
When music power and Black Power meet, as they do in the person and voice of Bernice Reagon, you certainly have the "sound of thunder". There are gentler sounds as well in this record of a former member of the Freedom Singers. Listening to the record is not only entertaining -- it educates as well. "Sounds Like Thunder", a work song, tells more about the feeling and reality of slavery than a whole bunch of textbooks. This and the traditional song "Steal Away" should be required listening in all our schools to give a sense of the dignity and determination of the enslaved black man. In the way that Bernice Reagon sings them can be heard the sounds of generations past. There is a very different and yet stunning rendition of a song learned from the Reverend Pearly Brown, "Vacation In Heaven", that speaks volumes about Negro history. And yet these songs are not sung in a pedantic manner but in a very personal and loving way.

Although Bernice Reagon does have a big voice there are beautiful moments of tenderness particularly when she is singing with herself (thanks to engineering). Guy Carawan's "Ain't You Got a Right" is one such moment as is "Steal Away". The record is labeled as Gospel and the two aforementioned songs do have that sound but in a warm old-timey way. A very short creation using a poem by Langston Hughes which she found herself "humming into songs" -- "Southern Gentle Lady" -- is a moving Haiku-like view of a lynching about which there is nothing to say except; it must be heard.

If there is any element missing perhaps it is that of humor. I do not miss it so much in the songs themselves as in the singing. True, most of the songs are expressions of anger and sorrow -- Don and Hedy West's "Anger In The Land" is one such -- and Miss Reagon sings it in long mournful lines. But in something like "Matriarch Blues", put together out of "bits and pieces of things I have heard that express for me those periods of depression which on occasion have come to me" -- I think I hear a little bit of laughing to keep from crying sound which seems dissipated by a slightly too heavy touch. This seems to happen in "Lil Birdie" too. I'm not saying there's anything particularly humorous in these two songs, but a certain wryness or irony might come out if the artist would let go of that big voice and swing a little more.

The brilliant idea of using only a bass, Congo drum and flute to accompany her singing works well in almost everything. There is a particularly great thing happening accompaniment-wise in "Vacation in Heaven" between bass and flute. The stark effect of the combination -- especially the rapid talking of the Congo drum -- provide the singer and the songs with a genuine and creative setting. They also gave me a feeling of an African sound which gives the record a feeling of roots deep into the Afro-American experience.

This is an unusual record that demands listening to rather than the doing something else at the same time stuff. It seems to me that in these times when even the white radical is finding out what he doesn't know (finally) -- "The Sound of Thunder" would be one good point to begin at.

BOB COHEN, Singer-Songwriter-Teacher

OTHER NEW L-P's: Len Chandler's "The Luvin People" (Columbia); Arle Guthrie's "Alice's Restaurant" is already a great big hit. (Reprise). Meanwhile, Arlo goes into the Bitter End (New York City) for two weeks starting Dec. 20th; Jerry Moore's "Life Is A Constant Journey" (ESP-Disk). Really a fine record. One of the best things on it: "Ballad Of Birmingham" (B'Side # 69; Tim Buckley "Goodbye And Hello" (Elektra). All the words are inside the record jacket. Some of the titles: "No Man Can Find The War", "Hallucinations", "I Never Asked To Be Your Mountain"; "The Fugs" (ESP-DISK). Is this the record Atlantic spent $25,000 on and then couldn't stomach the lyrics? ESP-Disk at the same time has released "The Fugs First Album" a reissue of BROADSIDE BR 304, which had absolutely nothing to do with B'Side Magazine.
LETTERS

Dear Broadside: Living and moving around as much as I do I seem to be getting my BROADSIDES in bunches (it's lucky my mother sends them to me at all). Well, after reading the letter by Julius Lester (#84) and your comment in the next issue I felt it time to write.

Julius is right -- our society is rotten to the core and corrupt; in fact it is already somewhat on a par with Nazi Germany. The fact that most of us have no real sense of crisis is proof of extreme decadence.

Julius' letter made me think. In fact I had to look up the word LOVE after reading what he said about it. "LOVE: a strong liking for or interest in something." I can no longer use it as just a word. It's meaningless just to say "love". The only time "love" can stand alone is when it concerns sex or a person whom you like. So when Julius says "love" it has to be understood what he means: love of hate and violence, but for a good cause -- if you believe in and love hate and violence. I think this is human -- tragic and wrong, but human.

I don't think LBJ and the rest of middle class America are human enough to really love or hate anything -- they exist in a suspended state between life and death. But this lethargy and somnolence of America has driven those who are still alive and human to two extremes. One, the love of hate and violence, the other the love of mankind and existence. The first will destroy the world -- but with a bang. The latter will preserve the world and make it wondrous and beautiful -- heaven. The state America is in now will destroy the world also -- but with the proverbial whimper.

Your editorial in #85* was beautiful and human. If only TIME would write things like that. After all, TIME is one big editorial (Big Mother is watching!).

I plan to live awhile on NECNVA's pacifist farm before going to jail for noncooperation (if they'll accept me at Voluntown -- I know they'll accept me in jail).

Peace, Freedom and (dammit I'm going to say it anyway, no matter how Lester and Webster define it) LOVE!

Robert Peden
Alaska

*The editorial, among other things, urged the American Jewish community to undertake massive drives to raise funds to establish kibbutzes for Negroes in this country, similar to fund drives for Israel.

Dear Sirs: Enclosed is my check for a 1-year subscription. I have not yet seen a copy of your publication, but I am hoping that it will suit me better than others I have seen.

I must say that the resignation of Julius Lester was one factor in your favor. If Broadside is yet another publication devoted solely to propaganda of the far left, I hope you will return my check.

Sheila Noonan
Dallas, Texas

Ed. Note: Our sole devotion is to common sense and at least a minimum of reason.

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Dear BROADSIDE: Re. Ed Applegate's letter to your magazine, issue #86.

He suggests that Mr. Julius Lester should shoot himself, then goes on to say it is a good idea to remove Mr. Lester's name from your contributing editors.

It's really funny about some people -- they become very upset when a black man mentions a desire to shoot someone, but nobody

(cont'd.)
LETTERS - 2

gets excited about all the needless deaths and cruel tortures that have been inflicted on the black man in this country for years upon years, and the ruthless exploitation to which he has been subjected.

The wisdom, strength, goodness and labor of the black people helped to build America and make it the rich country that it is today. Yet when the Negro people ask for something that should be theirs without question the white people have the crazy idea that they are doing the black man a favor by giving him his rights.

I don't know Ed Applegate, nor do I know Julius Lester. I do feel that Mr. Lester has a great deal to offer and he should contribute to BROADCIDE every chance he can. So, my words to Mr. Lester are: "Don't quit -- I think you're great!"

Madaline Cinelli
New York

P.S. Gordon Friesen's editorial in #85 is one of the best I have ever read.

Dear Sis & Gordon: ... Julius Lester's letter was tremendously provocative. It makes one think -- and, I hope, act.... H.D.R.

+ + + + + + + + +

Dear Broadside: You almost didn't get a renewal from me. I am, frankly, disgusted; some of the things you have published lately have reeked of hatred and narrow-mindedness, qualities which I never expected you to advocate.

So A hates B. What progress are we going to make if B hates A and wants to kill him? We aren't going to kill hatred by killing human beings. I'm glad that the word LOVE has found a place in the vocabularies of many Americans; and I commend the word to your attention. You might listen to what Joan Baez says and sings, now that you've stopped putting her down (you have stopped, haven't you?). So A hates B. Maybe if B does not hate A in return, A will notice this and realize that there are better things to spend a lifetime doing...

To end on a light note, I really enjoyed your Tallahatchie Bridge theories. I took pencil in hand and crossed out "A copy of..." and "lecture on folk music is dead" (I especially like "Billy Joe's Induction notice"). Then I added a few items to the list. Here are some:

"An invitation to Lynda Bird's wedding"
"An autographed picture of Louise Day Hicks"
"A pair of H. Rap Brown's overalls."
"An empty KKK cash box."

Seriously, I think it was an engagement or friendship ring. That's a woman for you. Shoot you down first and feel sorry later. Somebody ought to write a ballad (let's not misuse the word "ode") showing Billy Joe's side of things.

3d Force
Connecticut

+ + + + + + + + +

Dear Editor: I've become increasingly unhappy with Broadside Of Boston and as my subscription just ran out would possibly like to take your magazine instead. Could you please forward a sample copy, as I am a bit wary since the format of Dave Wilson's aforementioned "paper" has descended to -- well let's just let it go at that!

Mrs. D.A.
Missouri

+ + + + + + + + +

Dear Broadside: I plan on renewing my subscription every year for as long as you publish. Your choice of songwriters is usually excellent. However, there is one major song-
(Letters - 3) writer whom you have omitted: he is Leonard Cohen. Please see if you can manage to include his songs in future issues of Broadside. Judy Weisberg, New Mexico. P.S. This is one time that Sing Out has the jump on you. They've already included one of Cohen's songs in their latest issue (Aug.-Sept., 1967). Aren't you ashamed? (Ed. note: Yes. It's hard to get permission from Cohen's publisher)... Dear Broadsiders: Many different thoughts about controversies and will write on those -- just in summary: 1) Julius' letter was one of the most moving experiences a person could have. People seem to have read only one sentence, although a key one. 2) The WASP Wall St. boys own the Jewish landlords -- I think you missed the boat with your aid plan. 3) Broadside should never have more prose than song!! See § 85. Josh Dunson, Penna.... Dear Broadside: I guess printing a sheet once a month, or as often as possible, runs into a lot of coins. I am referring to Malvina Reynolds' ads. It would grieve me and, I'm sure, many others, if you were unable to continue publication. So I'm sending this small amount ($10) which I hope will help. I'll try to help all I can in the future. For your Broadside is truly a worthyendeavor. J. McIntosh, Calif.... Dear Broadside ... Your magazine is fabulous -- best one going as far as I'm concerned. M.R. Hawaii...

LEN CHANDLER CONCERT

"Luvin' People"

At Loeb Center
(W. B'Way & West 4th St. N.Y.C.)
Feb. 16, 1968, 8 PM
Tickets: $ 2.50 at door. In advance $ 2.
Order from Bernie Klay, 254-26 75th Ave., Glen Oaks, N.Y.

Also at LOEB CENTER. Jan. 12, 1968, 8 PM. Folk Music Workshop & Song Swap. Admission $.60 C
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MEMORIAL CONCERTS

"Bound For Glory" Tribute To Woody Guthrie

Carnegie Hall, N.Y.C. Jan. 20, 1968 2:30 and 8:30 P.M.
Partial list of performers: ARLO GUTHRIE, PETE SEEGER, ODETTA, JACK ELLIOT, RICHIE HAVENS, BROWNIE MCGHEE & SONNY TERRY. TOM PAXTON, JUDY COLLINS. Proceeds to Committee to Combat Huntington's Disease. Ticket info. - call Box Office.

NOTES: Rolf Gekeler, editor of the German magazine SONG, published in Nuremberg, covered the Newport Folk Festival last summer. His report appears in the latest issue, # 5. The tone of his article is set by the first two paragraphs, here translated from the German: "When a man travels all the way from Germany to the Newport Festival in the U.S.A. it is definitely with the anticipation of meeting such performers as Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Tom Paxton, Phil Ochs and Janis Ian. These represent the extraordinary voices of the younger generation, who for years have celebrated their first big success in Newport, and through whom the Festival has gotten its legendary renown as the 'mecca of folksong'. However, the 1967 official program did not include any of these well-known names (although Miss Baez did appear later). The leaders of the protest generation do not sing in Newport any more." Even at the "contemporary songs" workshop Gekeler heard no songs with the
NOTES (2) angry lyrics of a Bob Dylan. Rather, the songs tended to reflect inner meditation and resignation. Instead of tackling real life the songs wandered around among "rainbows", "trees" and "brooks." Considering that the world has reached the critical stage where all life on earth could be wiped out in the blink of an eye, Gekeler thought Newport 1967 strange. He asked some of the personalities there for their opinions. Some of the answers: Judy Collins, "Listeners no longer want to hear protest songs." Theodore Bikel, "The protest song movement in this country has been shattered on the realities of American politics."

That Newport had turned its back on the topical song movement was obvious also in the treatment accorded Broadside this year. To begin with, we were put in a booth out of the way and around in back. Operating on a miniscule budget, we took along a shopping bag full of groceries, cans of pork 'n beans, tuna fish, etc. The bag was stolen the first night. When our little staff, hungry to the bone, went to a party ostensibly for "the press" we were turned away. Standing in the shadows outside and watching the revelers inside whooping it up, swigging their drinks and gorging themselves, we felt at first like Lazarus at the gate of Dives. Then our little band thought of serenading those inside the brightly-lighted mansion with Phil Ochs' "Ringing of Revolution" (see B'Side # 60). We finally decided to wish only that Len Chandler had been there to lead us in singing his "luvin' People", (See B'Side # 77):

"For the love of people, Lord
Please make more luvin' people
Make them today."

(Ed. Note: Certain facts contradict those seeing a waning interest in the topical song movement. 1) PHIL OCHS -- who got on at Newport only by a fluke which B'Side helped engineer -- packs Carnegie Hall; Janis Ian (who has never been invited to Newport) packs Philharmonic Hall and wins rave reviews from N.Y. Times critic Bob Shelton. 2) There is much more interest in BROADSIDE right now than at any time since we started. We are literally swamped with mail, subscriptions, songs, records, subscriptions. In fact, if we had enough capital to produce a more "marketable package" and hire a few workers, and had a few more dedicated salesmen like Izzy Young at the N.Y. Folklore Center and Josh Wolinsky up at the City College Book Store, our circulation could rise unbounded...)

ADD NOTES: O WHAT A BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY -- Matt McGinn wrote this song at Bryn Mawr, Pa., near the end of his 3-month concert tour of the U.S. He sang it at the MAIN POINT where, he says "it went down well."

BOB COHEN is a N.Y. singer-songwriter once with the NEW WORLD SINGERS. He is a folk music teacher at the Bank Street College of Education Downtown Community School, and New Lincoln School... HAPPY TRAUM will give classes in finger-picking guitar at the N.Y. Fretted Instruments School of Folk Music. Call him at 914 OR9-2323... DAVE SEAR, a new studio to teach Folk Guitar & Banjo. Call AX 1-6413... UPCOMING at Israel Young's Folklore Center Folk Festivals: STAR SPANGLED STRING BAND Dec. 23 -- MIKE SEEGER Dec. 25 -- JOHN COHEN to show and discuss his film "The High Lonesome Sound" Jan. 8 -- HAPPY TRAUM Jan. 12. All times 8:30 p.m. All at 321 Sixth Ave., N.Y.C. For more info call 989-8811... Rev. Finley Schaef invites all folksingers to join in a Greenwich Village - Washington Square procession and Feast. Sun., Dec. 24, beginning at 1 PM. Call him at 777-2528... HAPPY HOLIDAYS & A GREAT NEW YEAR
A Presidents Prayer

Music: Traditional  Words: BOB COHEN
© 1967 Bob Cohen

The President prayed— Little Jesus mourned,
The President prayed— Little Jesus mourned,
The President prayed— Little Jesus mourned,
The President prayed— Little Jesus mourned.

2. Then the President's daughter came to the door
She said, Daddy, what are you prayin' for?
He said, daughter, your dad may go down in history
As having started World War Three.

3. I'm praying for my pilots, I want them home alive
I'm praying for my bombs, don't want them to hit a child
I'm praying for my hands covered over with blood
Then his daughter said, Daddy, come with me (3X)
My little monks will fix it to a tee.

5. So the President prayed, Little Jesus mourned (3X)
To see so many crucified on a summer morn.

--- POETRY SECTION ---

Vietnam Youth  April 1967 — No. 90

On February 14, 1967, Reuters reported from Philadelphia: "United States Defense Department has cancelled its subscriptions for 13,000 copies of a church magazine because of a poem in it by a girl of 12 years old.

The magazine mentioned was Vents, published by the Presbyterian church. Here are some excerpts from the poem.

There! There was the flash—silver and gold,
Silver and gold,
Silver birds flying,
Golden water raining,
The rice ponds blazed with new water.
The jungle burst into gold and sent up little birds of fire.
Little animals with fur aflame.
Then the children fainted.
Running — their clothes flying like fiery kites.
Screaming — their screams.
Dying as their faces seared,
The women's baskets burned on their heads.
The men's boats glowed on the rice waters.
Listen, Americans.
Listen clear and long. The children are screaming.
In the jungles of Haiphong.

I forgot to take a gun

I went to live
In a foreign land;
I forgot to take
A gun in my hand.
The wise men said
I should have found
Death in the air,
Hate all around.

But I didn't find
A foreign race,
Just a gentle woman
With kindly face.
A child who gaily
Ran to say
Two friendly words,
Shake hands, bat toy.
A thoughtful poet,
A man with a plough,
Who spoke of freedom:
Our time is now.

I didn't find
Hate in the air,
Just friendly people
Everywhere.
But then when I went
To this foreign land
I forgot to take
A gun in my hand.

Sonnet for a Sunday

(17 Australians dead but they kill 312 Vietcong)

Headline in Sunday newspaper)

Whose body stiffens in the jungle grass,
Its face upturning out of stricken eyes?
Whose blood is it that slowly spreads and dries
While grinding helicopter engines pass?
Did he once belt an ancient battered car
Down bitumen beside a golden beach,
Or strum a love song on a strong guitar,
And ponder planets just beyond his reach?
Or did he barefoot guide a wooden plough
That slashed the stubble and upturned the root,
And one bright night beneath a banyan bough
Entice a song from out a bamboo flute?
I cannot see the face of that dead one,
But this I know . . . he is my son, my son.
Mrs. Lady Bird

Words: Norman A. Ross
Tune: Adapted from the traditional (Mrs. McGrath) © by Norman A. Ross

Lady Bird has got the word, they're gonna make a soldier out of Linda Bird, with a khaki helmet and a khaki suit, oh Linda Bird won't you look cute. With your too-ri-a, fol-the-did-die-a, too-ri-o-ri-a

G Em G(Bm) (G) D

G Em

lar-ia, Wid yer too-ri-a,

G(Bm) (G) D G


So she got yer gun and off she went, to Vietnam she was sent, with her own gas mask and an M 16 Linda Bird looked so damn keen.

Lady Bird stayed in D.C. the months went by 1, 2, 3, 'til a helicopter landed on the lawn, oh, thank God, my daughter's home.

Lady Bird ran out as fast as she could but all she saw was a box of wood. It was covered over with the stars and stripes. Lady Bird do you have any gripes?

Up stepped the Sergeant and he bowed his head. Said Lady Bird your daughter's dead. But it could have been worse, oh can't you see. The Sergeant said, it could've been me.

Young men between 18 and 25 here's the plan if you want to stay alive. If the draft board calls and they're being choosy just tell them Lady Bird's still got Lucy.