

Streams of Gold

© 2008 George Mann

I was walking through a valley, bloody boots upon my feet
Feeling beaten, feeling tired, I was falling to my knees
When I came upon a clearing, signs someone'd been there before
As I walked into the open, up ahead of me I saw
Someone coming down the mountain, waving to me through the rain
"We looked back and saw you coming," he said, "let me explain...."

"There'll be fields of plenty, there'll be streams of gold
There'll be smiling, healthy children I am told, I am told
Though I realize you must walk alone
We will walk this trail together 'til you're home"

Forty years ago we started as we came home from the war
And like you we hadn't figured out what we were fighting for
Call it duty, call it honor, love of country or revenge
We have seen enough of killing, we just want some peace again

There'll be fields of plenty, there'll be streams of gold
There'll be smiling, healthy children I am told, I am told
Though I realize you must walk alone
We will walk this trail together 'til you're home

I'm still walking through that valley getting closer to my home
I'm so glad you're with me brother, now I know I'm not alone
I see other men and women, all the wounded from this war
We will carry one another 'til we all get through that door

There'll be fields of plenty, there'll be streams of gold
There'll be smiling, happy children you can hold, you can hold
Though I realize we must walk alone
We will walk this trail together
We will walk this trail together
We will walk this trail together 'til we're home

The Rift

(C) 2008 Walt Cronin

When I was younger
I often wondered
Just couldn't know then
What my life was to be

Then I was older
I was a soldier
Led to the places
That left me bereaved
That left me bereaved

What is the reason of all these things?
What can be so hard to see?
What is the reason of all these things?
How it left its mark on me

Came home a stranger
Consumed by anger
Of the world that had left me all on my own
All on my own

*So then I drifted
But never fitted into a life that I'd call my own
That I'd call my own*

What is the reason of all these things?
What's so hard for me to see?
What is the reason of all these things?
To be the man I wish to be

With years it lifted
And I could listen
I was not hopeless
As I once thought to be
That I thought to be

*So I slowly close the rift in me
Breathing fresh the light of day
Letting go of all the strains on me
Forgiving what I must forgive
Forgiving what I must forgive*

Writing in the Margins

By John Gorka © 2006 Blues Palace Music (ASCAP)

I am writing in the margins
Notes to me and you
Cause the pages are all filled
With new orders coming through

I am writing in the margins
Notes to you and me
So maybe we'll remember
The good that didn't have to be

I am writing in the margins
Cause our days are spoken for
And your nights are with the restless
Who were broken in this war

I stood twice and carried once
And yes I choose to serve
But there is no glory in it
And my voice goes mostly unheard

We go when we are called
And hope there's wisdom in the voice
And we fall back on our training
When the moment leaves no choice

I am writing in the margins
Getting closer to the edge
I am running out my time
I am walking on a ledge

I am riding in the margins
A horse that's going blind
Staying focused on my mission
And attached to my behind

I am writing in the margins
Listing all I need to fix
You know my job is still in transport
Today 20 tons of bricks

There are not a lot of rich boys
Wearing DCUs and sand
But I'll think about that later
When I make it home again

I'm writing in the margins
In the outskirts of a town
Peaking up at you
On the day you wore that gown

So I guess I'll try to sleep now
When I get this off to you
Knowing there is at least one thing
In this world that is still true

I am writing in the margins...

Michael

Words by Robert Service (1921), music © 2005 Greg Artzner and Terry Leonino

There's something in your face, Michael
I've seen it all the day
There's somethin' square that wasn't there
When first you went away, when first you went away

It's just the army life, mother,
The drill, the left and right,
That puts the stiffening in your spine
And locks your jaw up tight, and locks your jaw up tight

There's somethin' in your eyes, Michael,
And how they stare and stare
You're lookin' at me now, boy,
As if I wasn't there, as if I wasn't there

It's just the things I've seen, mother,
The sights that come and come
A bit of broken, bloody pulp
That used to be a chum, that used to be a chum

There's somethin' in your heart, Michael,
That makes you wake at night
And often when I hear you moan
I tremble in my fright, I tremble in my fright

It's just a man I killed, mother,
A mother's son like me
It seems he's always haunting me
He'll never let me be, he'll never let me be

But maybe he was bad, Michael,
Maybe it was right
To kill the enemy you hate
In fair and honest fight, in fair and honest fight

I did not hate at all, mother,
He never did me harm
I think he was a lad like me
Who worked upon a farm, I'm sure he worked upon a farm

And what's it all about, Michael?
Why'd you have to go?
A quiet, peaceful lad like you
When we were happy so, when we were happy so

It's them up above, mother,
It's them that sits and rules
We've got to fight the wars they make
It's us as are the fools, it's us as are the fools

And when will it end, Michael,
And what's the use, I say,
Of fightin' if whoever wins
It's us that's got to pay? It's us that's got to pay

Oh it will be the end, mother,
When lads like him and me
That sweat to feed the ones above
Decide that we'll be free, decide that we'll be free

And when will that day come, Michael?
And when will fightin' cease?
And simple folks may till their soil
And live in love and peace? And live and love in peace?

It's comin' soon and soon, mother,
It's nearer every day
When only those who work and sweat
Will have a word to say

When all who earn their honest bread
In ev'ry land and soil
Will claim the fellowship of all,
The comradeship of toil

When we the workers all demand,
"What are we fighting for?"
Then, then we'll end that stupid crime,
That devil's madness, war.

War Resister

© 2009 Jon Brooks

Was born, Jeremy Hinzman, Rapid City.
South Dakota, I still miss you.
I bought war cards as a kid.
I never knew mom or why she did what she did.
I went to Fort Bragg, Benning, too –
yeah, we don't know why we do what we do –
it's just: *'breathe, trigger, squeeze.'*

And I was trained to kill – “Kill we will,
in the 82nd Airborne we exceed the
standard!” (of soldiering) –
and my hands they'd shake with adrenaline.
We'd shoot at the circles until they grew legs,
6 weeks later we'd be shooting at men –
just: *'breathe, trigger, squeeze.'*
Yeah, I could shoot 36 out of 40.
Oh but I'm not studying war no more,
no, I'm not going back to Rapid City.

We left Anzio Base Housing
with the dishes in the sink, Nga, and Liam.
I'm a bike courier in Toronto now,
I got a secret that I can't tell.
My conscience is making me a criminal.
And my hands, they shake with the Peridol.
I asked Allah and I asked God's Son:
'What's freedom worth if it's bought with a gun?'
And: *'breathe, trigger, squeeze,'*
a voice inside of me
said, 'I'm not studying war no more
no, I'm not going back to Rapid City.'

Was born, Jeremy Hinzman, Rapid City.
South Dakota, I still miss you.

When Johnny Came Marching Home

(C) 2006 David Rovics

He got off the plane and looked at no one
He walked down the tarmac in the direction of nowhere
He followed the sun as it was setting
Glad to be done with all the bloodletting
There were no banners for the proud and the few
Just workers in airports that do what they do
Fuel up the planes, unload the bags
Along with the coffins all covered in flags
When Johnny came marching home

The town he was from was a dead little place
So he looked for a job somewhere off-base
In this city of pawn shops and hotels and bars
Gas stations, strip clubs, highways and cars
He went to a dive, ordered a beer
Said turn the music up loud so it's all that I hear
Try to rewind, turn back the years
Stop the explosions between my ears
When Johnny came marching home

The jobs were all shit and the beer it was cheap
And besides there was no other way he could sleep
Still the screams and the guns would wake him at night
He was always on edge and ready to fight
When he closed his eyes he would just see the face
Of a woman he killed in some far-away place
Over and over, the white of her eye
And her final and terrible terrified cry
When Johnny came marching home

After just a short time his health fell apart
With an ache in the joints and a thump in the heart
And the doctor just told him it's all in his head
But he couldn't stop drinking or get out of bed
And with no place to go but the wrong way
It was a shock to his ears when he heard himself say
Over and over to anyone within range
Hey mister, can you spare some change
When Johnny came marching home

I Am Willing

*Words and Music by Holly Near
© Hereford Music (ASCAP)*

I am open and I am willing
For to be hopeless would seem so strange
It dishonors those who go before us
So lift me up to the light of change

There is hurting in my family
There is sorrow in my town
There is a panic all across the nation
And there is wailing the whole world round

I am open and I am willing
For to be hopeless would seem so strange
It dishonors those who go before us
So lift me up to the light of change

May the children see more clearly
May the elders be more wise
May the winds of change caress us
Even though they burn our eyes

But I am open and I am willing
For to be hopeless would seem so strange
It dishonors those who go before us
So lift me up to the light of change

Give me a mighty oak to hold my confusion
And give me a desert to hold my fears
Give me a sunset to hold my wonder
And give me an ocean to hold my tears

But I am open and I am willing
For to be hopeless would seem so strange
It dishonors those who go before us
So lift me up to the light of change

Welcome Back to the USA

By Eric Schwartz

My name is Private Hannah
I'm just a poor kid from Savannah
I've been a scrapper ever since I was a boy
I joined the army when I could
To protect my neighborhood
From those who hate the freedoms I enjoy

And when we got the call
When Baghdad had to fall
I pledged my true allegiance right out loud
I kissed my only son
I said "Boy, now you're the one.
Don't cry. Just make your papa proud."

Now it's me can't keep the tears from coming down
When I see Old Glory flying from the church in my hometown

Welcome back to the USA
When the plane touched down, I heard the captain say
I see the proof of what I did
In every mother, in every kid
Living to be free another day

Welcome back to the USA
Just in time to watch New Orleans wash away
On a fourteen inch black and white
Under dim florescent light
In a cold and moldy room in the V.A.,
Welcome back to the USA

My name is Corporal Black
I finally made it back
To a country that forever shall be free
They sent us after Saddam
And by the grace of God, we got him
But not before a roadside bomb got me

And I was watching from above
When my lifetime's only love
Told the twins what happened to their dad
I couldn't hold them as they cried
I asked the spirit by my side
"If this is Heaven, how come it hurts so bad"

But I'm proud I got to sacrifice my life
To make this country safer for my children and my wife

Welcome back to the USA
Thanks for fighting for the right 'n American way
Sometimes it takes a bigger man
To do what he don't understand
And hope the truth will come to him someday

Welcome back to the USA
Lower the coffin, fire the cannon, walk away
But a thousand troops, a thousand flags
From Pendleton, Lejeune and Bragg
Are here to greet a new one every day
Where silently they'll say
Welcome back to the USA

Casualty of War

(C) 2001 Rodney Brown

Boot camp came early he was just seventeen years old
Just a country boy from the Rainy River Valley
The Lake Superior Regiment they sent him on his way
The youngest son of a single mom sailed across the sea
From the shores of Nova Scotia to a battlefield in Holland
And all the stories that he never cared to share
They'd haunt his dreams we'd wake to screams to know the horrors that he saw
He became a man, a husband and my father

When I was a boy a hundred soldier toys I'd line up in a row
With my rifle caps and my army hat I'd go marching
I'd shine his medals and wear them proud like a hero brave and true
But we never saw the tears he cried as he sat to watch me play
And the scars he wore behind his beard ran deeper than my mother feared
And from time to time he'd have to go away
He'd kill the pain like a cold hard rain but the drink would take its toll
It was my mother's determined love that finally saved him

Time does heal and the years went by and he told me of the day
And of the shouts and screams of his comrades just below him
He was the gunner sitting just above in a tank out in the field
And the only one to survive to tell the story
And he was half crazed and the other half dazed when he opened up the hatch that day
It was a story I could hardly stand to hear
As he ran straight for the enemy line just a yelling and cursing them all
And how the day turned black and they brought him back
A casualty of war

Here's to the man I knew and loved and to the man I'll never know
To the country boy from the Rainy River Valley

The Unknown

By Tom Paxton © Pax Music

We came down the Avenue together yesterday –
All my old-time buddies and I.
People lined the Avenue to see us yesterday,
As we were passing by.
'Cross the bridge to Arlington,
The sound of muffled drums –
A solemn and a stirring sight to see.
People stood in silence to see the caisson come,
As it carried me.

I could see my family together yesterday;
How were they to know it was I?
How I longed to comfort them,
And how I longed to say,
"Momma, don't you cry.
I'm just glad to be here
When my lonely journey's done –
Been a long time waiting for the day.
Time to quit your grieving
For your only loving son,
Momma, I'm okay."

Yes and I could see my buddies –
All the grunts were standing there;
They were something special to see.
Mostly getting heavy now,
And losing lots of hair,
But they looked beautiful to me.
Standing at attention
When they lowered me to rest –
Listen to the bugle and the drum.
Adios, amigos, from the one who loved you best,
Fellas, peace has come.

Yes, we came down the avenue together yesterday –
All my old-time buddies and I.
And people lined the avenue to see us yesterday,
As we were passing by.
'Cross the bridge to Arlington,
The sound of muffled drums –
A solemn and a stirring sight to see.
People stood in silence to see the caisson come
As it carried me.
Momma, I'm okay.
Fellas, peace has come.

Give Me A Dream

© 2002 *Emily Nyman and Lynn Berry*

Give me a dream where I live to grow old
And fathers return to protect us from the cold
And living in peace is free.
Give me a dream where I live to grow old
And lovers return and I have someone to hold;
Someone to care for me.

Someone to run through my dreams with me
When the night is cold and I cannot see
And the war is on the doorstep of our lives.
And patient ladies try to survive
Their sons have died; mothers have cried
And we all long for our brothers to come home.

Give me a dream where I live to grow old
And fathers return to protect us from the cold
And living in peace is free.
Give me a dream where I live to grow old
And lovers return and I have someone to hold;
Someone to care for me.

Look up to a sky that is wide
I reach for you - you're by my side
I am the lucky one – there is no pain
We can run through a warm September rain
And greet the homecoming train.

Oh to be in a peaceful world of certainty
With my beloved next to me
These are my hopes and my dreams
Without them, I'll come apart at the seams.

Give me a dream where I live to grow old
And fathers return to protect us from the cold
And living in peace is free.
Give me a dream where I live to grow old
And lovers return and I have someone to hold;
Someone to care for me.
Give me a dream.....

Yellow Ribbon

© 1991 Utah Phillips

I've traveled round the country
And I'll tell you what I've seen
A million yellow ribbons
And I wondered what they mean
It's love and hope and sympathy
For those who've gone to fight
But still I know that none of these
Can make the killing right

When we see two children fighting
Don't we try to come between
We get 'em both to talk
Instead of acting rough and mean
We give 'em love and limits
Say now try to get along
Then we tell 'em it's alright to kill
To prove that killing's wrong

Sometimes that yellow ribbon
Tries to make me feel ashamed
It tells me I'm a traitor
That somehow it's me to blame
But I can't hide behind it
Just to prove that I belong
And I won't be an accomplice
To things I know are wrong

But I'd wear a yellow ribbon
For the peace that's in my heart
I'd wear it for the loved ones
Who should never have to part
I'd wear it for the wasted lives
No matter friend or foe
And I'd wear it for the children
If they never had to go

Yes, I've seen the yellow ribbons
Hanging up all over town
But I don't think they'll ever buy
The peace we've never found
The guns will all be silent
And the battle flags all furled
When we tie a yellow ribbon 'round the world
The guns will all be silent
And the battle flags all furled
When we tie a yellow ribbon 'round the world

Endless War

© 2005 *Julius Margolin*

Our nation knows not where it's going
It's blind to what our future has in store
Ill winds of hate we keep on sowing
That blindly lead to endless war

Our youth who haven't lived yet
Know not of the blood and the gore
But they are daily being driven
Toward a cruel and bloody endless war

Oil profits and other plunder
The corporations play their role
War propaganda should make us wonder
Why endless war must be our goal

Endless war is planned in Washington
If we ever get out of Iraq
In Iran, Korea and who knows where else
Will our troops ever be coming back?

Will history never teach us?
Will our nation never learn?
What Hitler's Nazis couldn't do
Our nation too will burn

Who will pay the price and suffer?
And who will shed their blood and more?
No, not the corporations and politicians
But our youth and families, in endless war

So we call upon our nation
Remind the world just what's in store
We will show the world's millions
That this nation will not fight an endless war

Bandana Man

© 2007 Arlon Bennett

He rolled in off the highway like a dog without a home
Bandanas round his head on wheels of faded chrome
Pumpin' gas he told me how his life had changed
The war was on in Saigon when they called his name

Chorus

Bandana man
Wears a red one for the fallen
White for where they've gone
Blue for how he feels
Though he don't know you
He'll stop long enough to tell you
Nothin' wipes the tears away like a bandana can

His story goes he was shootin' from a hole
Far cry from all those times huntin' deer back home
In a flash from a blast his best friend was gone
He put a bandana over the face of a mother's only son

Chorus

He came home with honor he came home with pride
Came home with a hollow heart and a hitch in his stride
Started up that Harley and heard the callin' of the road
I offered up my best salute and watched him go

Chorus

Bandana Man

When the War is Won

© 2006 Erik Balkey & Pat Victor

Our father sent his only son to come forth in his name
A messenger for peace and love is a soldier just the same
A soldier for love, a soldier alone with a call not all would heed
And he would pay the price in blood the burden of those in need

When the war is won
In the memory of
Take the hands of your daughters and sons
And fill their hearts with love

1955 the call rang out from the front of a crosstown bus
To stand up for a simple dream she sat for all of us
From a Birmingham jail, he would endure 'til the trumpets of freedom sound
And he would pay the price in blood 'til justice like water rolls down

When the war is won
In the memory of
Take the hands of your daughters and sons
And fill their hearts with love

My son prayed and followed his heart in March he went to war
And I received that fateful call Palm Sunday, April 4
36 years to the day since shots from a Memphis gun
And I would pay the price in blood so mothers won't lose their sons

When the war is won
In the memory of
Take the hands of your daughters and sons
And fill their hearts with love

Welcome Home

© 2009 *George Mann*

The drugs are kicking in and your breathing is slow
The doctors all say any day you could go
Your hands are too weak to even pick up the phone
And you know that can't be called living

There's a faraway look I've never seen in your eyes
There's the knowledge the future holds no surprise
There's a chorus of angels when an old soldier dies
That gathers around him to sing

Welcome home, welcome home
What a life you have led
What a story you've told
Welcome home

Now the word's going out that you caught your last train
All the years of hard traveling end in this sad refrain
And only those who've known struggle could ever explain
And they rise and salute for to greet you

There's a faraway look I've never seen in your eyes
There's the knowledge the future holds no surprise
There's a chorus of angels when an old soldier dies
That gathers around him to sing

Welcome home, welcome home
What a life you have led
What a story you've told
Welcome home, welcome home
When you're on my mind I am never alone

Welcome home, welcome home
What a life you have led,
What a story you've told
Welcome home