

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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The Fields of Vietnam

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(Ewan MacColl)

Oh brothers though we're strangers and your land and mine are far apart,
and though your name lies awkwardly and strange upon my tongue.

As the needle's drawn towards the pole,
so I am drawn both heart and soul,
to sing of your great struggle in the fields of Vietnam.

Your barefoot farmers would not wear the yoke and chains of slavery -
for four long bitter years they fought the armies of Japan;
your flesh opposed their armoured might
you harried them by day and night -
and you drove them from the jungles and the fields of Vietnam.

Before you could draw peaceful breath more death was raining from the skies,
the French came, and for nine more years your land they overran;
but the enemy could not subdue.

They broke at Dien Bien Phu -
and their dead lay all around them in the fields of Vietnam.

The French had scarcely left your shores when more invading armies came,
equipped with all the latest tools men use to kill a man;

"We've come to show you," was their cry,
"all the ways a man can die -
and we'll make a bloody desert of the fields of Vietnam."

The skies by day were dark with planes, with hungry flames the nights were red,
the stench of death lay on the air with reek of spent napalm;

death bloomed in every paddy field,
and still your people would not yield -
to American invaders in the fields of Vietnam.

For thirteen years the U.S. Army's sown your soil with blood and tears,
impartially they deal out death to women, child and man,

and still no victory - instead
they count their own dishonoured dead,
and contempt's their only harvest in the fields of Vietnam.

O, brothers, where did you find the strength to fight so long for freedom's cause?

A quarter-century has passed since first your fight began;
long have you fought, and valiantly,
and as long as men love liberty -

they will sing of your great struggle the fields of Vietnam.

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