

PEPPERS AND TOMATOES

Ralph McTell

This year in my garden I grow peppers and tomatoes,
Peppers and tomatoes, they grow together well,
And my neighbours all around me they grow beans and potatoes
Cabbages and onions in this village where we dwell.

And later in the year we will bring wine to the table
Bring wine to the table, and reap what we have sown.
Like my father did before me and his father did before him
And his father did before him, we will share what we have grown.

This little patch of dirt, this little pile of stones.
I can wash the dust from off my face, and skin
But this earth is in my bones.

Military vehicles are passing through our village
Passing through our village with young soldiers ill at ease.
Unsmiling and unshaven, distrustful and uncertain
Distrustful and uncertain, and all smoking constantly.

And my neighbours say "Don't worry for you are one of us,
You are one of us and it will not happen here",
But the next night at the caf, when I bring wine to the table,
I bring wine to the table, but they are sitting drinking beer.

Oh, last night the hand of friendship fell heavy on my shoulders,
Heavy on my shoulders as I turned away to go.
As I said goodnight some old men, some old men and young soldiers
Were humming tunes and singing words to songs that I did not know.

Oh this little patch of dirt, oh this little pile of stones
I can wash the dust from off my face and skin,
But this earth is in my bones.

This morning my wife told me that she'd been to church on Sunday,
Been to church on Sunday, she had felt the need to pray.
Our children were baptised there but it was just to please the old ones,
Just to please the old ones, and I don't know what to say.

Tonight, as dark is falling, I am tending to my garden,
Tending to my garden, and the crop that I have grown.
And my car is heavy laden, and soon I'll start the engine,
Soon I'll start the engine, wake the children and be gone.

My shotgun it is loaded, and it's hidden in the cabin,
It's hidden in the cabin, and the evening's growing chilled.
My mouth is dry, my hands are moist, and if someone tries to stop me,
Someone tries to stop me, I am ready now to kill.

Oh this little patch of dirt, oh this little pile of stones
I can wash the dust from off my face and skin
But this earth is in my bones.

I am watering my garden, when I smell the cigarette smoke,
Smell the cigarette smoke, and I turn round in the dust
And I see the glint of rifles, but I cannot see the faces
But I recognise the voices that say, "You must come with us".