

The Ballad of Bill Brakefield

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(Stephen. L. Suffett)

1. Come gather 'round friends and a story I'll tell,
About William Brakefield, you may recall well.
He stood up for freedom, now he's in a jail cell,
But someday freedom is coming.
2. Bill was a lad, only nineteen years old,
When he went off to college in the Michigan cold,
But he left for the army because he was told,
That's where he'd get better training.
3. Fort Devens, Massachusetts, became home for Bill,
But he soon learned the army had only one will:
To train men to die and to train men to kill,
And that's not what Bill was in for.
4. So he deserted one evening into the dark night,
But never would he be a prisoner of flight,
So he made his stand public and challenged the might,
Of the entire United States Army.
5. A sanctuary on campus was given to Bill,
But only a symbol of valor and will,
Against those who imprison and against those who kill,
And one hundred and eighty stood with him.
6. The police came one morning and took us away,
And now in the stockade Bill Brakefield must stay,
But the words of the hero all folks can say:
Someday freedom is coming.

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Note: The campus was City College of New York, where Private Brakefield took refuge from October 31 to the early morning of November 7, 1968.

(a true story from 1968)

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