

La Colombe

Judy Collins

Why all these bugles crying for squads of young men drilled
To kill and to be killed and waiting by this train?
Why the orders loud and hoarse, why the engine's groaning cough
As it strains to drag us off into the holocaust?
Why crowds who sing and cry, and shout and fling us flowers
And trade their right for ours to murder and to die?

The dove has torn her wings so no more songs of love
We are not here to sing, we're here to kill the dove

Why has this moment come when childhood has to die
When hope shrinks to a sigh and speech into a drum?
Why are they pale and still, young boys trained overnight
Conscripts forced to fight and dressed in gray to kill?
These rain clouds massing tight, this train load battle bound
This moving burial ground sent thundering toward the night

Why statues towering brave above the last defeat
Old word and lies repeat across the new made grave?
Why the same still birth that victory always brought
These hoards of glory bought by men with mouths of earth?
Dead ash without a spark where cities glittered bright
For guns probe every light and crush it in the dark

And why your face undone with jagged lines of tears
That gave in those first years all peace I ever won?
Your body in the gloom, the platform fading back
Your shadow on the track, a flower on a tomb
And why these days ahead when I must let you cry
And live prepared to die as if our love were dead?