

The Herd, I Was Only 19

(yep, check)

Mum, Dad and Denny were some amongst many
who turned up to see the passing out parade at Puckapunyal
Seemed every man and his mongrel watched cadets stumble
on the long march to the Viet jungle
"Oh Christ", I mumbled as I drew that card
And my mates came to slap me on the back with due regard
We were the sixth battalion, yep next to tour
we did Canungra and Shoalwater before we left, rest assured
Seemed half of Townsville turned out to see us leave
And they lined the footpaths as we marched to the quay
The papers wrote it up like you would not believe
but we were looking to the future for a fast reprieve
The newspaper clippings show us young, strong and clean
rockin' slouch hats, slung SLRs and greens
God help me, I was only nineteen
From Vung Tau in black helicopters
The chinook pilots seemed relieved at Nui Dat when they dropped us
Feels like months running on and off landing pads
letters to Dad 'cause it's like, man, he's sad
But he can't see the tents that we call home
cans of VB and pin-ups on the lockers of the chicks off TV
The noise, the mosquitoes and the heat surprising
like the first time you see an agent orange horizon

So please can you tell me doctor why I still can't get to sleep
The scar's left in me?
Night time's just a jungle, dark and a barking M16
that keeps saying "rest in peace";
And what the hell's this rash that comes and goes
I don't suppose you can tell me what that means?
God help me, I was only nineteen

Sent off on a four-week long operation
where every single step could be your last one
on two legs it was sorta living hell
falling with the shells, war within yourself
But you wouldn't let your mates down 'till they had you dusted off
so you closed your eyes and thought of something else
Then someone yelled "contact!"; another bloke swore
we hooked in there for hours then a god almighty roar
Then Frankie kicked a mine, the day that mankind kicked the moon
God help me, he was going home in June

And I can still see Frank with a can in his hand
thirty-six hour leave in the bar at the Grand
I can still hear Frank, a screaming mess
of bleeding flesh, couldn't retrieve his legs
The ANZAC legend neglected to mention the mud
The fear, the blood, the tears, the tension
Dad's recollection beyond comprehension
didn't seem quite real until we were sent in
The chaos and confusion, the fire and steel
hot shrapnel in my back I didn't even feel
God help me, I was only nineteen

So please can you tell me doctor, why I can't get to sleep
I can't hardly eat?
And the sound of the Channel Seven chopper still chills me to my feet
still fuels my grief?
And what's this rash that comes and goes
like the dreams, can you tell me what that means?
God help me, I was only nineteen

Mum and Dad and Denny saw the passing out parade at Puckapunyal
It was a long march from Cadets
The sixth battalion was the next to tour
It was me who drew the card
we did Canungra and Shoalwater before we left

So please can you tell me doctor, why I can't get to sleep
I can't hardly eat?
And the sound of the Channel Seven chopper still chills me to my feet
still fuels my grief?
And what's this rash that comes and goes
like the dreams, can you tell me what that means?
God help me, I was only nineteen