

The Ballad of Ira Hayes

Bob Dylan

Gather round me people, and a story I will tell
About a brave young Indian you should remember well
From the tribe of Pima Indians, a proud and a peaceful band
They farmed the Phoenix valley in Arizona land
Down their ditches for a thousand years the sparkling water rushed
Till the white man stole their water rights and the running water hushed
Now Ira's folks were hungry, and their farms grew crops of weeds
But when war came, he volunteered and forgot the white man's greed. Call him drunken Ira Hayes
He won't answer anymore
Not the whiskey-drinking Indian
Or the Marine who went to war
Yes, call him drunken Ira Hayes
He won't answer anymore
Not the whiskey-drinking Indian
Or the Marine who went to war. They started up Iwo Jima hill, two hundred and fifty men
But only twenty-seven lived to walk back down that hill again
And when the fight was over and Old Glory raised
One of the men who held it high was the Indian, Ira Hayes. Call him drunken Ira Hayes
He won't answer anymore
Not the whiskey-drinking Indian
Or the Marine who went to war
Call him drunken Ira Hayes
He won't answer anymore
Not the whiskey-drinking Indian
Or the Marine who went to war. Ira returned a hero, celebrated throughout the land
He was wine and specked and honored, everybody shook his hand
But he was just a Pima Indian - no money, no crops, no chance -
And at home nobody cared what Ira'd done, and when do the Indians dance? Call him drunken Ira Hayes
He won't answer anymore
Not the whiskey-drinking Indian
Or the Marine who went to war
Call him drunken Ira Hayes
He won't answer anymore
Not the whiskey-drinking Indian
Or the Marine who went to war. Then Ira started drinking hard, jail was often his home
They let him raise the flag there and lower it like you'd throw a dog a bone
He died drunk early one morning, alone in the land he'd fought to save
Two inches of water in a lonely ditch was the grave for Ira Hayes. Call him drunken Ira Hayes
He won't answer anymore

Not the whiskey-drinking Indian
Or the Marine who went to war
Call him drunken Ira Hayes
He won't answer anymore
Not the whiskey-drinking Indian
Or the Marine who went to war. Yes, call him drunken Ira Hayes, but his land is still as dry
And his ghost is lying thirsty in the ditch where Ira died. Call him drunken Ira Hayes
He won't answer anymore
Not the whiskey-drinking Indian
Or the Marine who went to war
Call him drunken Ira Hayes
He won't answer anymore
Not the whiskey-drinking Indian
Or the Marine who went to war.

Songwriters

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