

The Ballad of Ira Hayes  
Townes Van Zandt [Peter LaFarge]

Come gather 'round me people  
There's a story I'd like to tell  
About a brave young Indian  
You should remember well

From a tribe of the Pima Indians  
A proud and noble band  
Who farmed the Phoenix valley  
Down in Arizona land

Down the ditches for ten thousand years  
The sparkling waters rushed  
Til the white man stole the water rights  
And the runnin' waters hushed

Now Ira's folks grow hungry  
Their lands grow crops of weeds  
When war came Ira volunteered  
And forgot the white man's greed

Call him drunken Ira Hayes  
He won't answer anymore  
Not the whiskey drinkin' Indian  
The Marine that went to war

They battled up Iwo Jima hill  
Two hundred and fifty men  
But only twenty-seven lived  
To walk back down again

And when that fight was over  
And when Old Glory raised  
Among the men that held her high  
Was the Indian Ira Hayes

Ira came back a hero  
He was celebrated through the land  
He was wined and speeched and honored  
Everybody shook his hand

But he was just a Pima Indian  
Had no money, no home, no chance  
In Arizona no one cared what Ira'd done  
Just wanted the Indians to dance

So Ira started drinkin' hard  
Jail was often his home  
They'd let him raise the flag and lower it  
Like you'd throw a dog a bone

He died drunk early one mornin'  
All alone in this land he fought to save  
Two inches of water In a lonesome ditch  
Was a grave for Ira Hayes

Call him drunken Ira Hayes  
He won't answer anymore  
Not the whiskey drinkin' Indian  
The Marine that went to war

Yeah, call him drunken Ira Hayes  
But his land is still as dry  
And his ghost is lyin' thirsty  
Down in the ditch where Ira died

C C | F C | G G | F C