

These next two pieces are by a participant who was only able to attend two sessions at Reading Jail before he was transferred. This is common – the average stay in Reading Prison is only 6 weeks. The lines for ‘Charlie Finn’ he sent through later by letter. The second piece, ‘Stand and Fight’, again began as rap-type lines, but converted easily to ballad form, which we agreed gives it a timeless quality. We agreed that these lines would work well for a male choir, beginning as a single voice.

Charlie Finn

(unknown soldier)

In the darkest hours
Of the loneliest nights
I see the world burst up
And fight upon a field of low yield.

God knows, hell knows
I see clubs of the street rise to their feet
As blood flows
Remember Charlie Finn
The soldier nobody knows.

Like warriors of old
Youth still fight
How little we have learnt
Over centuries of war.
As one goes out
One comes in
And shrieks of Charlie Finn
Wring out across a world of sin.

Oh young Charlie Finn
Do not despair
Let man into those bloodshot eyes
See behind those gunshot eyes
See what goes on
Sin in the night, let man in
And you will fall on a field of better yield.

Stand and Fight

All my life through
I’ve tried to do what’s right
I know no other way
But to stand and fight
I’m feeling so up
Yet I’m locked down in the night
I’m hypeing so much
Like I could take flight

I've stood out from the rest
I've stepped into the breach
Where war stuck to me
Like a bloody leech

I've seen gunshot eyes
Heard shrieks all around
Traded tit for tat
Paid pound for pound

All my life through
I've tried to do what's right
I know no other way
But to stand and fight
I'm feeling so up
Yet I'm locked down in the night
I'm hypeing so much
Like I could take flight

Now I stand in the valley of wrong
Soil falls through my fingers
And the feeling of despair
Lingers and lingers

I live for the time
Which I'll never know
When a man like me
Can learn to love and grow

Oh I'm feeling so up
Locked down in the night
I'm hypeing so much
Like I could take flight
All my life through
I've tried to do what's right
I know no other way . .