

# Songs for Discussion

## The D-Day Dodgers

(Words: Anonymous; compiled and edited by Hamish Henderson.

Tune: Lili Marlene. Recorded: Ewan MacColl, Folkways (British Army Songs)

We're the D-Day Dodgers, way off in Italy  
Always on the vino, always on the spree;  
Eighth Army scroungers and their tanks,  
We live in Rome, among the Yanks.  
We are the D-Day Dodgers, way out in Italy. (Repeat)

We landed in Salerno, a holiday with pay,  
The Jerries brought the bands out to greet us on the way.  
Showed us the sights and gave us tea,  
We all sang songs, the beer was free  
To welcome D-Day Dodgers to sunny Italy.

Naples and Casino were taken in our stride,  
We didn't go to fight there, we went just for the ride.  
Anzio and Sangro were just names,  
We only went to look for dames  
The artful D-Day Dodgers, way out in Italy.

Dear Lady Astor, you think you're mighty hot,  
Standing on the platform, talking tommyrot.  
You're England's sweetheart and her pride  
We think your mouth's too bleeding wide.  
That's from the D-Day Dodgers, in sunny Italy.

Look around the mountains, in the mud and rain,  
You'll find the scattered crosses, some that have no name.  
Heartbreak and toil and suffering gone,  
The boys beneath them (linger) slumber on.  
They are the D-Day Dodgers who stayed in Italy.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O4hny\\_XRaw4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O4hny_XRaw4)

### Suggested questions:

What is the meaning of the expression 'D-Day Dodgers'; why were they sometimes called that?  
Is there an "us" and a "them"? How would they be constructed?  
Check out the place names and find out why they are relevant.  
Who is Lady Astor? Why were the singers against her?

# The Foggy Dew

(Words and music: Anonymous)

'Twas down the glen one Easter morn  
To a city fair rode I.  
When Ireland's line of marching men  
In squadrons passed me by.  
    No pipe did hum, no battle drum  
    Did sound its dread tattoo  
    But the Angelus bell o'er the Liffey's swell  
    Rang out in the foggy dew.

Right proudly high over Dublin town  
They hung out a flag of war.  
'Twas better to die 'neath an Irish sky  
Than at Suvla or Sud el Bar.  
    And from the plains of Royal Meath  
    Strong men came hurrying through;  
    While Britannia's sons with their long-range guns  
    Sailed in from the foggy dew.

'Twas England bade our wild geese go  
That small nations might be free.  
Their lonely graves are by Suvla's waves  
On the fringe of the grey North Sea.  
    But had they died by Pearse's side  
    Or fought with Valera true,  
    Their graves we'd keep where the Fenians sleep  
    'Neath the hills of the foggy dew.

The bravest fell, and the solemn bell  
Rang mournfully and clear  
For those who died that Eastertide  
In the springing of the year.  
    And the world did gaze in deep amaze  
    At those fearless men and true  
    Who bore the fight that freedom's light  
    Might shine through the foggy dew.

## Suggested questions:

What is the reference to Easter? (Why was Easter significant for the symbolic value of the event?)  
Why would Suvla and Sud el Bar be mentioned?  
Who are the 'wild geese'?  
Who are Pearse and Valera?  
What are the Fenians and what is the reference for sleeping under a hill?  
(Why are they significant or symbolic?)

# Ludlow Massacre

(Words and Music: Woody Guthrie)

It was early springtime that the strike was on  
They moved us miners out of doors  
Out from the houses that the company owned  
We moved into tents at old Ludlow

I was worried bad about my children  
Soldiers guarding the railroad bridge  
Every once in a while a bullet would fly  
Kick up gravel under my feet

We were so afraid they would kill our children  
We dug us a cave that was seven foot deep  
Carried our young ones and a pregnant woman  
Down inside the cave to sleep

That very night you soldier waited  
Until us miners were asleep  
You snuck around our little tent town  
Soaked our tents with your kerosene

You struck a match and the blaze it started  
You pulled the triggers of your Gatling guns  
I made a run for the children but the fire wall stopped me  
Thirteen children died from your guns

I carried my blanket to a wire fence corner  
Watched the fire till the blaze died down  
I helped some people grab their belongings  
While your bullets killed us all around

I will never forget the looks on the faces  
Of the men and women that awful day  
When we stood around to preach their funerals  
And lay the corpses of the dead away

We told the Colorado governor to call the President  
Tell him to call off his National Guard  
But the National Guard belong to the governor  
So he didn't try so very hard

Our women from Trinidad they hauled some potatoes  
Up to Walsenburg in a little cart  
They sold their potatoes and brought some guns back  
And put a gun in every hand

The state soldiers jumped us in a wire fence corner  
They did not know that we had these guns  
And the red neck miners mowed down them troopers  
You should have seen those poor boys run

We took some cement and walled that cave up  
Where you killed those thirteen children inside  
I said, "God bless the Mine Workers' Union"  
And then I hung my head and cried

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XDd64suDz1A>

### **Suggested questions:**

Find out what the story is.

Where did the events take place?

What is the role of the "singer" (I-narrator)?

Who are "us", who are "them" and where is the I-narrator?

What effects are created by the use of "you"?

# Which Side are You On

(Words: Florence Reece Music: Traditional)

Come all of you good workers,  
Good news to you I'll tell  
of how the good old Union  
has come here to dwell.  
Which side are you on boys,  
which side are you on?

Don't scab for the bosses,  
Don't listen to their lies.  
Us poor folks haven't got a chance  
Unless we organize.

They say in Harlan County  
There are no neutrals there.  
You'll either be a union man  
Or a thug for J. H. Blair.

Oh, workers can you stand it?  
Oh, tell me how you can.  
Will you be a lousy scab,  
Or will you be a man?

My Daddy was a miner  
And I'm a miner's son;  
And I'll stick with the union  
Till every battle's won.

My daddy is a miner,  
He's in the air and sun,  
But he'll stick with the union  
Till every battle's won.

Dropkick Murphys <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKWfnO7fhQM>

Ani di Franco in a 2013 rewrite (Obama's 2<sup>nd</sup> Term)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XDd64suDz1A>

## Suggested questions:

Who are the sides in the struggle?  
Find out about the author of the words, Florence Reece.  
In the last verse, how do we need to understand the words, which were sung  
by the daughters of Florence Reece?  
What more recent versions are there and how do they adapt to song to which  
events? (Billy Bragg – check him out -- / Ani di Franco, etc.)

## Skye Boat Song

Speed, bonnie boat, like a bird on the wing  
"Onward," the sailors cry.  
Carry the lad that's born to be king  
Over the sea to Skye.

Loud the winds howl, loud the waves roar  
Thunder claps rend the air  
Baffled our foes stand on the shore  
Follow they will not dare.

Though the waves leap, soft shall ye sleep  
Ocean's a royal bed  
Rocked in the deep, Flora will keep  
Watch by your weary head.

Many's the lad fought on that day  
Well the claymore could wield  
When the night came, silently lay  
Dead on Culloden's field.

Burned are our homes, exile and death  
Scattered the loyal men.  
Yet, e'er the sword cool in the sheath  
Charlie will come again

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1CTxa-FuKc>

### Suggested questions:

What does the song refer to?  
Who is "us" and who is "them"?  
Why the escape to Skye?  
Who is Charlie, who is Flora?  
What are the references to claymore and to Culloden?  
What happened before the events described?

## Shame Shame Shame (Steve Zahn and Friends)

Look up in the sky  
Its a bird, its a plane  
Its, o hell yeah I'm watching New Orleans  
Bring this bird down 8000 feet  
Lets have a little see  
O no, o no that's not good at all  
This city wet, really wet  
It must be twice as bad on the ground  
Twice as bad, twice as bad, ya think?  
Shame shame shame on you now W  
Shame shame shame on you now W  
Shame shame shame what you done  
We was on the ropes, we were down and out  
You flew on over, never did come down  
Shame shame shame on you now W  
Shame shame shame on you now W  
Shame shame shame what you done  
Now, Georgie I think its all well and good  
For you to do what you can  
For those wet colored folks  
I know you mean well  
But I was just over at the Astrodome  
Now Maw, you know the Stros  
Don't play there no more  
It ain't like we don't have room in Houston  
Yes, but its still a lovely place and  
Practically part of the neighborhood  
And most people are camped out  
Like they are on the 50 yard line  
And its way nicer,  
Than where they were before the storm,  
So they're doing very well for themselves  
Ok, yeah that's kind of a cheap shot  
Except we didn't make most of that up  
Barbara Bush actually said some of that sh\*t  
Now people can't get home, to go to and from  
But you thinking we can find  
On the Astrodome floor  
Shame shame shame on you there Barbara  
Shame shame shame on you now Barbara  
Shame shame shame bout what you done  
So dig it,  
Now we got the people of New Orleans  
Living on Air Force bases  
And in raggedy ass motels from Utah to Georgia  
And people in Washington talking about  
Keeping the housing projects closed  
Yeah, that's right  
They don't want no more poor people  
Coming back to New Orleans  
But, I tell you what  
New Orleans without poor people ain't New Orleans

Because its the people  
Without a pot to p\*\*s in  
Who keep the beat and  
Blow the horns and  
Step in the streets and  
Right now, y'all are stuck  
Listening to this messed up white boy  
Because whichever 14 year old  
From Lafite projects is the next Smiley Lewis  
He's stuck out there in east bum f\*\*k Texas  
He can't get home, to sing this f\*\*king song  
Shame shame shame on you now W  
Shame shame shame on you now W  
Shame shame shame bout what you done

(from Season 1 of HBO series "Treme";  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WcKvCjO4JIM>)

### **Suggested questions:**

What event(s) is this song about?  
Identify some of the personal references?  
How are "us" constructed? Who are "them"?  
Which references are "public", i.e. accessible without much insider knowledge?  
Which ones are "specific", i.e. familiar to locals or the in-group, which ones need research?



# On Morecambe Bay

(words and music Kevin Littlewood)

Out beyond the street lamp's empire  
And the calliope's roar,  
Beyond the thrift, the wrack, the samphire,  
Where the sea betrays the shore,  
I have seen them in the tide's wake,  
As the rain cuts through the spray,  
Figures on the edge of daybreak  
Walking out on Morecambe Bay

Here's the very life to die for,  
Here's a life not as it seems,  
Sleeping on a foreign floor  
Five to a room no space for dreams.  
Tempted by the urge to travel,  
Strangers in a stranger land,  
Now they dig in sand and gravel,  
Plastic bags gripped in their hands.

For the tide's the very devil,  
It can run you out of breath,  
It can race you on the level,  
It can chase you to your death,  
Yes the tide's the very devil  
And the devil has his day  
On the weary cockle grounds of Morecambe Bay

Letters home with money orders  
See how much we earned today;  
Tales of crossing Europe's borders,  
So we came to Morecambe Bay;  
This is where the cockles sleep  
In their beds so soft and sound;  
This is where our watch we keep  
On these weary cockle grounds

I have met them in the markets,  
Brushed their arms in grocery queues,  
I should have grabbed them by the jacket,  
Should have told them what I knew;  
Told them what my mother told me  
As we paddled in the waves  
Never try and race the tide  
Across the sands of Morecambe Bay

For the devil's in the tide's flood  
He'll be weighing down your shoes  
He'll be churning up the sea's mud  
This is one race he won't lose  
Yes the tide's the very devil  
And the devil has his day

## On the weary cockle grounds of Morecambe Bay

Now I see them in the distance  
Laid out in the dawn's hard light,  
Helpless in the sea's persistence,  
Twenty-three drowned in one night.  
Up above in skies so clear  
Their phone calls half the world had crossed  
'Between the rivers Kent and Keer  
We have raced the tide and lost.'

In Fujian, Xelang, Baihu,  
Where they mourn their kith and kin,  
Where the men with snake tattoos,  
Rack up the debts and call them in;  
Parents stand, their arms flung wide  
As their children walk away,  
Heading out to race the tide  
Across some foreign bay.

(Oh ) the tide's the very devil,  
It can run you out of breath,  
It can race you on the level,  
It can chase you to your death,  
Yes the tide's the very devil  
And the devil has his day  
On the weary cockle grounds of Morecambe Bay  
On the weary cockle grounds of Morecambe Bay.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mSpLu6LPu4I> (Kevin Littlewood)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UN8gAlhSMDA> (Christy Moore, shorter version)

## On Morecambe Bay

Who are the "us" and who are "them"?  
How are the various referents constructed?  
Who feels solidarity with whom?  
How does the appeal to listeners function?

# Big Bill Broonzy Songs

## I Wonder When I'll Get To Be Called A Man

When I was born into this world, this is what happened to me  
I was never called a man, and now I'm fifty-three  
    I wonder when, I wonder when,  
    I wonder when will I get to be called a man  
    Do I have to wait till I get ninety-three?

When Uncle Sam called me, I know'd I'd be called a real McCoy  
But I got none of this, they just called me soldier boy  
    I wonder when,...

When I got back from overseas, that night we had a ball  
Next day I met the old boss, he said "Boy, get you some overalls"  
    I wonder when,...

I've worked on the levee camps, and axer gangs too  
Black man's a boy, don't care what he can do  
    I wonder when,...

They said I was uneducated, my clothes were dirty and torn  
Now I've got a little education, but I'm still a boy right on  
    I wonder when,...

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XvG\\_FvPbEhg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XvG_FvPbEhg) (with some textual variations)

## Black, Brown & White

This little song that I'm singin' about  
People you know it's true  
If you're black and gotta work for a living  
This is what they will say to you  
    They says if you was white,  
    should be all right  
    If you was brown, stick around  
    But as you's black, m-mm brother,  
    git back git back git back

I was in a place one night  
They was all having fun  
They was all buyin' beer and wine  
But they would not sell me none

Me and a man was workin' side by side  
This is what it meant  
They was paying him a dollar an hour  
And they was paying me fifty cent

I went to an employment office  
Got a number 'n' I got in line  
They called everybody's number  
But they never did call mine

I hope when sweet victory come  
With my plough and hoe  
Now I want you to tell me brother  
What you gonna do about the old Jim  
    Crow?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0c1c0ZsTLA&list=PLozurY9ohykjnoEqLLn6XulTX3jRxqpqq> Big Bill Broonzy Original Recording

## **Big Bill Broonzy Songs**

How do these songs construct “us” and “them”

What instances of racial discrimination are there in these songs?

Why is Broonzy wondering about when he would be called a man?

What does Uncle Sam call him for?

What is the reference to Jim Crow.

# Deportees

(Words and Music: Woody Guthrie)

The crops are all in and the peaches are rotting  
The oranges are piled in their creosote dumps  
They're flying 'em back to the Mexico border  
To take all their money to wade back again

Goodbye to my Juan, farewell Roselita  
Adios mis amigos, Jesus y Maria  
You won't have a name when you ride the big airplane  
All they will call you will be deportees

My father's own father, he waded that river  
They took all the money he made in his life  
It's six hundred miles to the Mexico border  
And they chased them like rustlers, like outlaws, like thieves

Some of us are illegal, and some are not wanted,  
Our work contract's out and we have to move on;  
Six hundred miles to that Mexican border,  
They chase us like outlaws, like rustlers, like thieves.

We died in your hills, we died in your deserts,  
We died in your valleys and died on your plains.  
We died 'neath your trees and we died in your bushes,  
Both sides of the river, we died just the same.

The skyplane caught fire over Los Gatos Canyon  
The great ball of fire it shook all our hills  
Who are these dear friends who are falling like dry leaves?  
Radio said, "They are just deportees"

Is this the best way we can grow our big orchards?  
Is this the best way we can raise our good crops?  
To fall like dry leaves and rot on out topsoil  
And be known by no names except "deportees".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4jWFPLjYEaw> (Joan Baez)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gtigp6DA314> (Arlo Guthrie, live at Farm Aid 2000)

**Suggested questions:**

Find out what you can about this plane crash.

How does Guthrie construct “communities” in this song?

What could the continuing appeal of this song be?

# Took the Children Away

(Words and Music: Archie Roach)

This story's right, this story's true  
I would not tell lies to you  
Like the promises they did not keep  
And how they fenced us in like sheep.  
Said to us come take our hand  
Sent us off to mission land.  
Taught us to read, to write and pray  
Then they took the children away,  
    Took the children away,  
    The children away.  
    Snatched from their mother's breast  
    Said this is for the best  
    Took them away.

The welfare and the policeman  
Said you've got to understand  
We'll give them what you can't give  
Teach them how to really live.  
Teach them how to live they said  
Humiliated them instead  
Taught them that and taught them this  
And others taught them prejudice.  
    You took the children away  
    The children away  
    Breaking their mothers heart  
    Tearing us all apart  
    Took them away

One dark day on Framingham  
Come and didn't give a damn  
My mother cried go get their dad  
He came running, fighting mad  
Mother's tears were falling down  
Dad shaped up and stood his ground.  
He said 'You touch my kids and you fight me'  
And they took us from our family.  
    Took us away  
    They took us away  
    Snatched from our mother's breast  
    Said this was for the best  
    Took us away.

Told us what to do and say  
Told us all the white man's ways  
Then they split us up again

And gave us gifts to ease the pain  
Sent us off to foster homes  
As we grew up we felt alone  
Cause we were acting white  
Yet feeling black  
One sweet day all the children came back  
    The children come back  
    The children come back  
    Back where their hearts grow strong  
    Back where they all belong  
    The children came back

Said the children come back  
The children come back  
Back where they understand  
Back to their mother's land  
The children come back

Back to their mother  
Back to their father  
Back to their sister  
Back to their brother  
Back to their people  
Back to their land  
    All the children come back  
    The children come back  
    The children come back  
    Yes I came back.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=br83o\\_JpIFw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=br83o_JpIFw) (studio recording with lyrics)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TC-l0vQHIWs> (live with actors)

### **Suggested questions:**

Where is this song set?  
What does it refer to?  
Can you find other, similar stories in other settings?  
Who are “us”, who are “them”?



# Hero of War

## *Rise Against*

He said 'Son  
Have you seen the world?  
Well what would you say  
If I said that you could?  
Just carry this gun  
You'll even get paid'  
I said, 'That sounds pretty good'  
Black leather boots  
Spit-shined so bright  
They cut off my hair  
But it looks alright  
We marched and we sang  
We all became friends  
As we learned how to fight

A hero of war  
Yeah, that's what I'll be  
And when I come home  
They'll be damn proud of me  
I'll carry this flag  
To the grave if I must  
Cause it's a flag that I love  
And a flag that I trust

I kicked in the door  
I yelled my commands  
The children, they cried  
But I got my man  
We took him away  
A bag over his face  
From his family and his friends  
They took off his clothes  
They pissed in his hands  
I told them to stop  
But then I joined in  
We beat him with guns  
And batons not just once  
But again and again

A hero of war  
Yeah, that's what I'll be  
And when I come home  
They'll be damn proud of me  
I'll carry this flag  
To the grave if I must  
Cause it's a flag that I love  
And a flag that I trust

She walked  
Through bullets and haze  
I asked her to stop  
I begged her to stay  
But she pressed on  
So I lifted my gun  
And I fired away  
And the shells  
jumped through the smoke  
And into the sand  
That the blood now had soaked  
She collapsed with a flag in her hand  
A flag white as snow

A hero of war  
Is that what they see?  
Just medals and scars  
So damn proud of me  
And I brought home that flag  
Now it gathers dust  
But it's a flag that I love  
It's the only flag I trust

He said 'Son  
Have you seen the world?  
Well what would you say  
If I said that you could?'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DboMAghWcA>

## Suggested Questions

What do the opening lines tell us about recruitment?  
In the second verse, is there a reference to particular place?

What is the role of the flag?

What is the likely consequence for the returning hero of war?

## **Hush here comes...**

### **Popular Song 1911**

Hush! here comes the Dream man.  
Hush! here comes the Dream man.  
Now, you children, run up the stairs,  
Put on your nighties and say your  
prayers;

Ride with Mister Dream man,  
Till daylight comes again,  
And see all the wonders of  
wonderland  
On the Dream man's train.

### **WW1 Soldiers' Song 1914-1918 (whizzbangs are grenades)**

Hush, here comes a Whizzbang.  
Hush, here comes a Whizzbang.  
Now you soldiermen get down those  
stairs,  
Down in your dugouts and say your  
prayers.

Hush, here comes a Whizzbang,  
And it's making right for you.  
And you'll see all the wonders of No-  
Man's-Land,  
If a Whizzbang [BANG!], hits you.

## **Suggested Questions:**

How do the soldiers reconstruct the original song?

What is the effect?

Can we say that there is an "us-and-them" construction here? If so, how does it work?