

The band played Waltzing Mathilda

Now when I was a young man I carried me pack
and I lived the free life of the rover.
From the Murray's green basin to the dusty outback
well I waltzed my mathilda all over.
Then in 1915 my country said "Son,
it's time you stopped rambling, there's work to be
done."
So they gave me a tin hat and they gave me a gun
and they marched me away to the war.
And the band played Waltzing Mathilda
as the ship pulled away from the quay
and amidst all the cheers
the flag-waving and tears
we sailed off for Gallipoli.
And how well I remember that terrible day
our blood stained the sand and the water
and of how in that hell that they called Suvla-Bay
we were butchered like lambs up in the slaughter.
Johnny Turk he was waiting he primed himself
well
he showered us with bullets and he rained us with
shell
and in five minutes flat he'd blown us all to hell
nearly blew us right back to Australia.
But the band played Waltzing Mathilda
when we stopped to bury our slain
we buried ours and the Turks buried theirs
then we started all over again.
And those that were left, well, we tried to survive
in that mad world of blood, death and fire
and for ten weary weeks I kept myself alive
though around me the corpses piled higher
Then a big Turkish shell knocked me arse over
head
and when I woke up in me hospital bed
and saw what it had done,
well I wished I was dead
never knew there was worse things than dying.
For I'll go no more waltzing mathilda
all around the green bush, far and free
to hump tents and pegs
a man needs both legs
no more waltzing mathilda for me.
So they gathered the crippled, the wounded, the
maimed,
and they shipped us back home to Australia.
The legless, the armless, the blind, the insane,
those proud wounded heroes of Suvla.
And as our ship pulled into Circular Quay

I looked at the place where me legs used to be
and thanked Christ there was nobody waiting for
me
to grieve, to mourn and to pity.
But the band played Waltzing Mathilda
as they carried us down the gangway
but nobody cheered, they just stood and stared,
then they turned all their faces away.
And so now every April I sit on me porch
and I watch the parade pass before me.
And I see my old comrades, how proudly they
march,
reviving old dreams of past glories.
And the old men march slowly, all bones stiff and
sore,
they are tired old heroes from a forgotten war,
and the young people ask
"What are they marching for?"
and I ask meself the same question.
But the band plays Waltzing Mathilda
and the old men still answer the call
but as year follows year
more old men disappear
some day no-one will march there at all.
Waltzing Mathilda, waltzing mathilda,
who'll come a-waltzing mathilda with me,
and their ghosts may be heard as they march by
that billabong
who'll come a-waltzing mathilda with me?

