

There Were Roses Tommy Sands

My song for you this evening, it's not to make you sad
Nor for adding to the sorrows of this troubled northern land
But lately I've been thinking, and it just won't leave my mind
To tell you of two friends one time who were both good friends of mine
Allan Bell from Banagh, he lived just across the fields
A great man for the music and the dancing and the reels
O'Malley came from South Armagh to court young Alice fair
And we'd often meet on the Ryan Road and the laughter filled the air

Chorus:

There were roses, roses
There were roses
And the tears of the people ran together

Though Allan he was Protestant and Sean was Catholic-born
It never made a difference for the friendship it was strong
And sometimes in the evening when we heard the sound of drums
We said, It won't divide us, we will always be at one
For the ground our fathers ploughed in, the soil it is the same
And the places where we say our prayers have just got different names
We talked about the friends who'd died and we hoped there'd be no more
It's little then we realized the tragedy in store

Chorus:

It was on the Sunday morning when the awful news came round
Another killing has been done just outside Newry town
We knew that Allan danced up there, we knew he liked the band
But when we heard that he was dead we just could not understand
We gathered at the graveside on that cold and rainy day
And the minister he closed his eyes and he prayed for 'No revenge'
And all the ones who knew him from along the Ryan Road
They bowed their heads and said a prayer for the resting of his soul

Chorus:

Fear it filled the countryside, there was fear in every home
When the car of death came prowling round the lonely Ryan Road
A Catholic would be killed tonight to even up the score
O Christ, it's young O'Malley that they've taken from the door
Allan was my friend, he cried, he begged them with his fear
But centuries of hatred have ears that cannot hear
'An eye for an eye' was all that filled their minds
And another eye for another eye till everyone is blind

Chorus:

So my song for you this evening, it's not to make you sad
Nor for adding to the sorrows of this troubled northern land
But lately I've been thinking, and it just won't leave my mind
To tell you of two friends one time who were both good friends of mine
I don't know where the moral is or where the song should end
But I wonder just how many wars are fought between good friends
And those that give the orders are not the ones to die
It's Bell and O'Malley and the likes of you and I

Chorus: