When Johnny Came Marching Home

David Rovics

The town he was from was a dead little place
So he looked for a job somewhere off-base
In this city of pawn shops and hotels and bars
Gas stations, strip clubs, highways and cars
He went to a dive, ordered a beer
Said turn the music up loud so it's all that I hear
Try to rewind, turn back the years
Stop the explosions between my ears
When Johnny came marching home

The jobs were all shit and the beer it was cheap
And besides there was no other way he could sleep
Still the screams and the guns would wake him at night
And he was always on edge and ready to fight
And when he closed his eyes he would just see the face
Of a woman he killed in a far-away place
Over and over, the white of her eye
And her final and terrible terrified cry
When Johnny came marching home

After just a short time his health fell apart
With an ache in the joints and such a thump in the heart
And the doctor just told him it's all in his head
But he couldn't stop drinking or get out of bed
And with no place to go but the wrong way
It was a shock to his ears when he heard himself say
Over and over to anyone within range
Hey mister, can you spare some change
When Johnny came marching home