

FEAR NOT (in the Stile Nacht)

by Joyce Johnson Rouse

Iowa prairie, it was 1944
Three thousand men so far from home, prisoners of war
They'd worked to bring the harvest in, but now the task was done
With idle time they worried for their future and for their distant loved ones

Eduard lay awake at night with Christmas memories
Of the village creche at home in Bielefeld, Germany
First he built it in his head, then told a few his plans
What would their captors say of this, and would they try to stay the prisoners' hands?

CHORUS

Fear not in the stile nacht
Maybe those who hold us here are not the enemy
God be our guide as we struggle inside
And stumble on our way to find our own humanity, and fear not

The prisoners counted out their cash, a precious store revealed
From eighty cents a day they'd earned working in the Iowa fields
They bought concrete and plaster, mixed it with some soil
They formed and carved a Christ child and a manger scene, for a year they toiled

Word went through Algona, the nearby little town
The prisoners had built a gift to them for the kindness shown
Townfolk hesitated — What of their brothers at the front?
Was it disloyalty to share a Christmas moment with these German sons?

REPEAT CHORUS

Back then they were the enemy but today they are our friend
War and peace the circle goes, must it begin again?
Still the sons and daughters come to see that manger scene
From all around the world to stand in peace and hear the angel sing...

REPEAT CHORUS