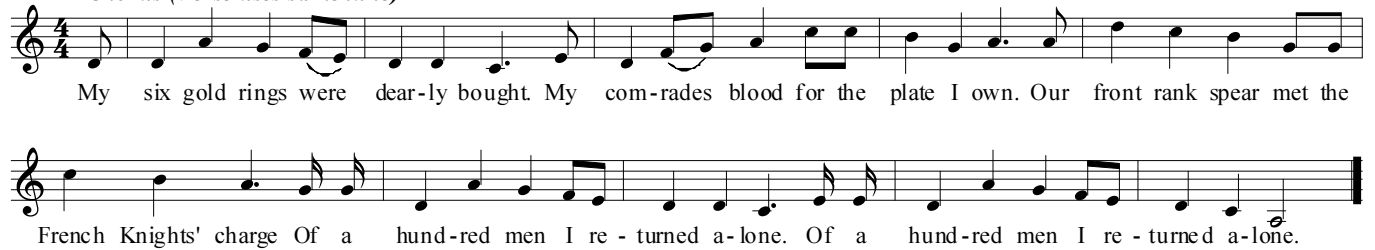


Catalan Vengeance

Words-Moses ben Eldad Music-Peggy Seeger

Chorus (Verse uses same tune)



My six gold rings were dear-ly bought. My com-rades blood for the plate I own. Our front rank spear met the French Knights' charge Of a hund-red men I re - turned a-lone. Of a hund-red men I re - turned a-lone.

We were Spanish troops in Sicilian ships
And the king of the Greeks had sent to hire
Our thousand spears to scour the Turks
From his Eastern Realm with sword and fire.
We drove the Turks to the Iron Gates,
But the faith of a prince keeps not the day.
We were bandits now said the king of the Greeks
So he hanged our captain and stole our pay.

The crusader kings of the East we told
Of our own hard fight and the Greek king's shame
But the German laugh and the Frankish sneer
Said a rabble of spear was but fair game
From the wine-dark sea we marched on west
'Til we came to the Duke of Athens' land.
His herald said "Wear chains or die."
By Kephisses River we're forced to stand

We made our camp on a grassy hill
In the midst of a league of marshy ground
That a light armed man might cross with care
Where an armored horse must soon sink down
Our hundred best at the marshes edge,
Six hundred hid in the reeds behind,
While a thousand horse of the Duke's own troop
Rode along the stream to surround our line.

An arrows flight from our waiting spears
The knights formed ranks with a joyous sound.
Now the first wave comes at a walk, now trot
Five hundred ride for the killing ground.
At a hundred yards we see their blades
But the horses' hooves are what you fear,
Five hundred tons of steel and flesh
And you bar their path with an eight-foot spear

At fifty yards their lances dip
We grip our pikes in gauntlet hand,
As a steel-shod thunder drowns our cries
And the ground shakes so we can hardly stand.
They smashed our line and trampled all,
Who stood to fight, who turned to flee,
And plunged in over the marsh's edge
In the red soaked mud to the horses' knee

The knights looked up and saw our troops
Still standing on the further shore.
"Form up!" called the duke in knee-deep mud,
"We'll smash these dogs with one charge more."
They sank in mud to the riders' thighs,
"Push on!" the duke of Athens said.
So we hurled out darts and fired our bows,
Five hundred trapped and the rest are fled.

"Free pass and ransom," the duke he cried,
But we know the worth of a French knight's word
So we cut his throat and stripped his arms,
And left his flesh for the dogs and birds.
I crawled on out to the shaky ground
As the crow dipped low on stiffened wing,
Where a young squire moaned with his faceplate gone,
Cut his right hand off for it's golden ring.

Rich gifts they brought, these Frankish knights,
Who called us bastard Spanish curs.
We had arms and mail and a duke's own helm,
Two bushels brim with silver spurs.
My comrades lie in the white Greek soil,
But they do not rest in the earth alone,
Five hundred knights and a Frankish duke
Share a pool of mud for a marking stone.