

By Holly Gleason

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What it means to be Irish

The glimmering glass
Filled with the foaming amber waves
Frothing over the rim onto
The dark oak panels
Waxed to shine against the dim lights of the pub.
Cheerful banter and pain poured into new health can be heard along with
Toasts and blessings
Of cheating: "If we must cheat, may we cheat death."
Of stealing: "The only thing worth stealing is a lady's heart."
And of course drinking: "if you drink, may you drink with me."
This is what it means to be Irish.

The heavy strums of the dark wood guitar
Harmonized with the sharp strings of an old mandolin
Joined by deep round hits of a bodhran
Met with a high whistle or two
Get the pub moving so when it's
"no nay never no nay never no more"
The wild rover keeps playing on.
Dancing shoes are donned
And feet do the talking until
Drowsy Maggie falls on the floor.
Then the applause is given of
"Dance as if no one were watching, Sing as if no one were listening,
And live every day as if it were your last"
This is what it means to be Irish.

Laughter and ale make up the convivial pub
The people's blood runs green and gold with pride for their land
Love is held best by their friends, family, and bartenders
People are fighting one minute then buying each other pints the next
Words of wisdom are passed and best wishes given
Freud could not describe these people because
Somehow the saddest day of their future is no worse than the happiest of their past
Because this is what it means to be Irish

