

# Danny Boy



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著者:Malachy McCourt

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“Danny Boy” is a small song -- two verses -- and Malachy McCourt’s book is small gem. Too long for an essay, too short for a learned tome, it fits well in the hand, an amusing and giftable piece of Irish history.

The song’s lyrics are younger than we might have thought, and possibly written by an Englishman -- one is unsure whether McCourt wants us to believe this heresy in order to start a hundred loud disputes in crowded local pubs, or wants to put to rest the question of the song’s provenance for once and for all no matter what we may think about it -- thus resulting in a hundred loud disputes...

Much of the book is tongue in cheek, and as with any good Irishman’s tale, the story is more in the embellishments than in the exact factual detail. You’d like to hear it read, to savor the accent and the lilt, and this feeling takes precedence over the story. In fact feeling is what Danny Boy, the song, is all about. All Americans love the Irish, in theory, and feel a special personal claim to the (London)derry Air (fiercely guarded from being called the Derriere).

The discography is one of the better bits of the book. Anyone who has heard the song,

and this must include all white Americans by the age of their majority, can exult in the thought of someone named Paddy MacNamara singing it or James Galway wrapping his flute around the tune. But Johnny Cash? No tenor he. Bill Monroe -- tenor and, it may be said, of the auld sod . But can the lyricism of the verses BE distilled into the high lonesome? And these are less of a stretch than Patti Page, Conway Twitty or Mario Lanza. Yet mysteriously all these greats and near-greats were drawn to it.

Intriguing too, as McCourt points out, the viewpoint of the song. When sung by a woman, is she imagining a lost child who will someday return to mother' s grave to sing a poignant ave? Or is it a man surely, young lover laddy determined to come back for his darling, she secretly knowing her "grave will warmer sweeter be, and you will bend and tell me that you love me..." Is it as some have suggested, a father who sings to his son?

Or all the sons of Ireland singing for themselves and their own fathers when they took the chance and left the glens and calling pipes of Erin. Every immigrant feels so - the lure of the "golden cage" (La Jaula de Oro) as described by the Los Tigres del Norte when they turned their backs on old Mexico -- has wrested them, probably forever -- from the safe green shadows of home. Their songs take them briefly back.

"Danny Boy," with its captivating tune and sparse evocative lyrics, speaks to all the Irish, as McCourt makes clear, from the warring north of the isle to its music-rich southern republic. Protestant and Catholic alike must stand and take a dram for Danny Boy. And not just they --

"The message is available to all those who want to hear it. 'Danny Boy' has a profound effect on people from all corners of the world, a trait it shares with the truest of any work of art."

作者介绍:

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