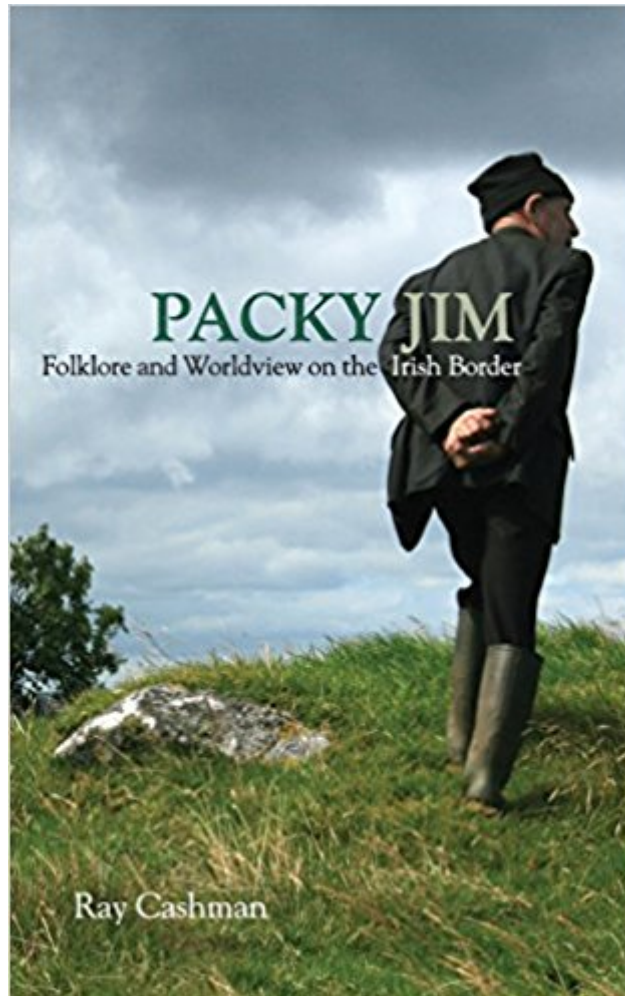




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Packy Jim: Folklore And Worldview On The Irish Border



Synopsis

Growing up on a secluded smuggling route along the border of Northern Ireland and the Republic, Packy Jim McGrath regularly heard the news, songs, and stories of men and women who stopped to pass the time until cover of darkness. In his early years, he says, he was all ears—but now it is his turn to talk. Ray Cashman, who has been interviewing McGrath for more than fifteen years, demonstrates how Packy Jim embellishes daily conversation with stories of ghosts and fairies, heroic outlaws and hateful landlords. Such folklore is a boundless resource that he uses to come to grips with the past and present, this world and the next. His stories reveal an intricate worldview that is both idiosyncratic and shared—a testament to individual intelligence and talent, and a window into Irish vernacular culture.

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"Skillfully presents and analyzes stories naturally emerging from conversation and expressing a worldview that is both communal and formed by unique life experience. ... Highly recommended." —Choice "Draws on interviews with Packy Jim McGrath, a Donegal storyteller who grew up on a smuggling route on the border of the Republic and Northern Ireland." —Chronicle of Higher Education "Octogenarian bachelor Packy Jim emerges here as both typical and singular, a barometer of continuity and change. McGrath's resilience, dignity, and strong sense of self manifest clearly in his stories, which locate him both in the technological consumerist future and in the primordial self-sufficient past. Ray Cashman's sharp and sympathetic observation delivers a classic

ethnography that stakes a major claim for folkloristic studies as cutting-edge humanities research." —Lillis Laoire, National University of Ireland–Galway"A brilliant testament to the ethnographer's art, the deeply rooted wisdom of an 'ordinary' person, and the complex ways in which folklore figures in everyday life along the Irish border." —James P. Leary, author of *Folksongs of Another America*

A Donegal storyteller engages with this world and the next

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