

# Green Grow The Rashes O

♩ = 100

Scottish 18th Century  
Robert Burns

Green grow the rash-es, O. Green grow the rash-es O. The  
*rit.* *a tempo*  
sweet-est hours that e'er I spend are spent a-mong the lass-es O!  
*rit.*

"Green Grow the Rashes O" was one of Scottish poet Robert Burns' more popular songs, after "Auld lang syne". It was quite popular in the United States during the War with Mexico 1845-1848. Many of the invading United States troops sang the song in camp and when marching. Mexican spies heard the song many times while attempting to spy on the United States camps.

To describe their enemy, in place of the more cumbersome term "Norte Americanos", the Mexican spies began referring to them as "Green Grows". "Green Grows" easily devolved into a neologism that was easier to say: "Gringos".

So, on the next Cinco de Mayo, remember raise a glass of Corona, Dos Equis or Pacifico and drink a health to Scottish poet Robert Burns, without whom we would not have gringos.

On the other hand, the song may have been the unrelated "Green Grow the Rushes (Lilacs/Holly/etc.) Ho" and the term "gringo" may come from Spain and predate the Mexican War of 1845-8. That's the boring version. But the Burns song has a better melody, and the war story is more entertaining. Besides, I first heard the war story from a Mexican Doctor in the District Federale.

Verse 1: There's nought but care on every hand, In every hour that passes, O! What signifies the life o' man; And 'twere not for the lasses, O!

Performance suggestion: Do a ritard in bars 4 and 8 of the chorus section, and really draw out "the lasses O." Then pick the tempo back up again.