

Garrison Keillor on the Sons of Knute

"Oh we had a lovely party in Lake Wobegon last night. Every last Norwegian was there with an appetite. We don't much like each other and yet we reunite At the Sons of Knute Christmas dance and dinner."

"There was knackebrod and herring, and old Norwegian cheese Strong enough to knock a bachelor farmer to his knees And Svendson brought an aquavit that tastes like antifreeze, You have a glass and you cannot feel your tonsils."

"There was Clarence Peterson and Hjalmar Peterson and Esther Peterson and Lois Peterson And Carl Peterson and Evelyn Peterson and Pete Peterson he was there too."

"And then out came the main dish that everybody wants, The bowls of shining lutefisk, the fish de resistance, From a family recipe of Johnny Johnson's aunts With the white sauce that can send you straight to heaven."

"And meatballs made of pork and beef lightly browned And boiled red potatoes, about a hundred pounds, And everyone was silent as the platters went around There was no sound except for people chewing."

"There was Clarence Oleson and Hjalmar Oleson and Gladys Oleson and Lois Oleson And Carl Oleson and Carolyn Oleson and Ole Oleson he was there too."

"I sat next to Hjalmar Peterson, now there's a tough old bird. We sat and chewed our dinner and we didn't say a word. Cause everything we have to say, we've already heard So what's the use of pointless conversation."

"We had a quart of whiskey and a couple kegs of beer. And everyone drank faster as we watched it disappear. Then Svendson got out the aquavit and everybody cheered! We drank a toast to the King and Queen of Norway."

"There was Clarence Larson and Hjalmar Larson and Gladys Larson and Lois Larson And Carl Larson and Judy Larson and Lars Larson he was there too."

"I raised my hands for silence and then I told a joke About Ole and Lena, one not meant for decent folk. And Pastor Jonsson laughed so hard I thought he'd have a stroke. And he blew some tapioca out his nostrils."

"And then we moved the tables and we woke up the band, I danced with all the pretty girls, I took em by the hand, There's nothing warms an old man's heart like a sweet young woman can At the Sons of Knute Christmas dance and dinner."

"There was Christina Larson and Christina Svendson and Christina Peterson and Christina Oleson And Christina Anderson and Christina Johnson and then



Garrison Keillor

my wife said 'That's enough for you.'

"Then at two o'clock in the morning we finally swept all the trash away And put on our overcoats and said a last adieu."

"We said goodbye in the hallway and said goodbye on the stairs We said goodbye on the sidewalk in the cold December air Then we leaned against the cars and said goodbye out there And we headed home to have an Alka Seltzer."

"And the next day when we woke up, we were sick in bed, Our stomachs were kind of rocky and there was hammering in our head But that evening we felt better and we sat up and said, 'Boy, that was a heck of a Christmas party.'"

"There were Petersons and Andersons and Christensens and Olesons And Larsons and Rasmussens and I believe that you was there too. "

Source: Garrison Keillor, "Prairie Home Companion," Dec. 20, 2003; Minnesota Public Radio