

Advice to an Old Friend

As modern man tries to cope,
Many just cry and begin to mope.
The poet was right about the world;
It is too much with us and we feel quite furred.

Some think that they shouldn't have to live
In a house beside the road that is likely to give
A feeling of crowded traffic, especially at night.
That could often result in unwanted fright.
Trains on the tracks, cars to the right, cars to the left,
Planes in the sky, very loud noises, hardly the best.

The love of country is hard to proclaim
When all of the people just shout and complain.
Keep your head high when others lose theirs;
Blame it on them, but avoid their hard stares.

To get yourself calm again try to think not
What your country can do for you (and don't get so hot).
Just cool it dear friend and think serenely
Of a nice shore or mountain in your mind cerebrally.

Note: This is a modern day "Puzzle Poem."

- o It is written in the style (structure, meter), but not language, of one of Robert Burns' poems as printed in *Robert Burns in Your Pocket* (bio & selected poems), Waverly Books, Glasgow, 2009.
- o The title is a play on words from two of Burns' other poems.
- o Within the poem, there are some words of five other poets and a politician.

To a Muse

On being asked if my “weekend warrior” wounds were from slaying dragons
(in a style enjoyed by Robert Burns - and in keeping with his sentiments – though not about things
Burnsian)

Preface

Truth is a lukewarm and watery drink
Best left if there’s liquid more flavoury
So let me leave problems of levering loads
Mistakes, and how bed rest is slavery

If delusion's a drug
Oh give me a jug
And let me spin yarns of great bravery
Of dragons impaled
And wild oceans sailed
To thwart the great Saracens' knavery.

The Dream

Arriving on a distant shore
With aching heart and carcass sore;
No rest was ever sweeter.
I settled down to pass the time
And spin a verse or two of rhyme,
Rehearsing an old metre.
While dreams were spinning in my head
Of chivalry and God,
The Tylenol made this my bed
And I began to nod.
Such wild dreams; how real seemed;
As if I bravely stood
With sword clenched; the air stench'd
Of dragons in the wood!

But no! - a Sinorama Tour
Of Chinese dragon myths, no more,
Had raised my nasal hairs.

I joined in time to see the sights,
The guide dispelling hopes of fights
With dragons in their lairs.
When herded back into our bus
I asked what smelled so foul.
“You foreigners, but please don’t fuss”
She smiled and hid her scowl.
I sat down; a grave frown
Deep furrowed in my brow,
Then napping, was mapping
Where dreams would take me now.

I did awake to urgent pleads:
A damsel in yon tow’r had needs
Requiring my redress.
With sword held high, well gripped and strong
I turned my steed and charged along,
With lust I must confess.
One noble bound; we crossed the gate
And stopped inside the keep
But she yelled down “You came too late!
Not now. You were asleep.”
Belated, frustrated,
I kicked the courtyard dust.
A trap door! One verse more!
I’ll do what all knights must!

I fell upon the Bloody Game
And searched for Saladin by name
Beneath King Richard’s flag.
By now the Third Crusade was on,
Our goal - Jerusalem - was gone
And spirits had to sag
But for our Lionheart who roared
“Bad endings ne’er will be!
“Sheath scimitars; scabbard your swords!
“We shall return by sea!”
We parted, light-hearted
No more to see those shores
Returning with yearning

And wisdom from the wars.

And God's good grief, one chapter more?
For slaying evil you implore
As purpose for my pain.
Once more crusading I do go
This time in books wherefore to know
Where evil may be lain:
The knights knew not what they fought for
For all Gods point to love,
And Knowledge now's what we adore
And what our world's made of.
So saying, and weighing
All truth by what is meant
I'm preying and slaying
Fake news - evil intent!

Ma Mither Tongue

Oan Burns Nicht it's aft remarked
 That ma thick brogue belies the fact
 That forty years hae roar'd an' hack'd
 Sin auld lang syne
 An' mony wonder how ma craic
 Ne'er mellowed time

Well let me tell it's no' by chance
 That ah should spack wae lallans glance
 Or recite lines that jibe an' dance
 Wae standard habbie
 Hornbook, Louse or De'il perchance
 Frae Ayrshire's Rabbie

When ah tack'd here frae ower the seas
 Ah read reports that made mae freeze
 How *thousands* deid ae' heart disease
 In these fair lands
 But research didna mak' mae pleased
 It made nae sense!

The Nippon flag o' Risin' Sun
 Must shield the hearts o' auld an' young
 For even though they'll Fugu munge
 On Puffer Fish
 The average age o' Han's auld sons
 Beats long an' rich

Yet in the lands o' Nordic parts
 They sook on pork an' greasy fats
 Auld salty fish that spits an' spats
 Aft lutefisk bone
 But somehow these cauld Viking hearts
 Exceed our groans

Doon by the Med they like their wine
Auld Grillo grapes that age on vines
They drink beyond the world's guidelines
On sips an' slurps
Wae aging hearts their beat stays fine
Like weel oil'd pumps

While in that land o' Harsha fame
Whare spice hot curries fill yir wame
They drink far less than maist we ken
Frae points o' airts
Yet heart disease aye stays the same
Aft mair, or less

The lowest rate o' sex warld ower
Is fund amidst the Algiers towers
They so restrict their carnal powers
An' houghmagandy
Their aft constrained libido genes
Outlive us handy

But in Brazil they're mad fir sex!
They'll fornicate frae noon till six
An' eftir tea they'll tak' a fix
On channeled porn
An' low behold like athletes fit
Their heart beats on

An' so ah practice lang and hard
Tae keep ma lallans tongue inspired
Ah sing auld sangs an' cram our Bard
Like Muses on Parnassus
For ah've surmised your strangled heart
Gets choked - by speaking English!!

Oor Twa Lands

Ma mither tongue o' guid broad Scots
 Was born an' bred on porridge oats
 Was learned amang the miner's rows
 Near bridges ower the River Forth
 Auld Reekie was oor favourite haunt
 When'er tae shop or jig or jaunt
 So ower the years an accent grew
 That's still a portion o' me noo

But chance an' fortune gie ye' guide
 I must fir wife an' weans provide
 So noo a live amid great lakes
 Whare NAFTA rules the border gates
 This northern land o' geese an' ice
 Has so became oor hame an' life
 But let me gie yir coat a tug
 An' whisper somethin' in yir lug
 That may assist some ither hands
 Explain connections 'tween oor lands

Since colonies were ance devised
 We Scots hae forged this nation's drive
 By river bends an' mountain range
 The ice packed north was tracked an' named

Sir William Alex asked King James
 Permission tae expand his reign
 The plan wis tae establish toons
 Frae Halifax tae Saskatoon

As high tides blew in Hector's boats
 An' Highland clans were cleansed by force
 In Pictuo they first set afoot
 An' built New Scotland's Gallic roots

Lord Selkirk ventured further west
Red River an' by Winnipeg
While in the East McDonald's Clan
Striped oot trees an' cleared the land

An' on they came an' on they spread
Alang St Lawrence tae Quebec
Then doon the lakes they built Glengarry
Guelph an' places they called 'Barry'

Frae coast tae coast the Scots enhanced
The towns an' structure o' the land
The Dick McBride's an' James McGill's
Built railroads, tunnels, bridges, schools

James Douglas factored out BC
McKenzie searched the Northwest seas
In Halifax Keith brewed some ale
As Brantford phoned up Graham Bell

Provincial steps helped build a nation
By politics o' federation
Sir John McDonald swore an oath
An' so the Nation's seal was forged

An' while these names are famed afar
This land was built through toil an' graft
The landed Scot wha ventured forth
Tae self-improve his sense an' worth

Frae Gander Bay tae Barkley Sound
Ancestral steps are traced an' found
So lift yir glass an' raise your han'
The toast this nicht ... is oor twa lands!

Musings on Fifty Golden Years Thegither

I've been blest I ken it's true
 Wi fifty years married to you.
 Yon day at auld Stamperland Kirk
 when han' in han' we pledged each vow
 "I do." Sealed our lo'es forever now.
 Your beauty left me feeling ne're a care
 My he'rt was racin', an' organ music filled the air.

We left auld Scotia in pursuit of what?
 Trowth, we didna really gi'e it much thought.
 Tae follow some fieres to Canada's Vancouver toun (fieres = friends)
 But flying high through the air, saut tears rowe' doon.
 Parting from family, fieres and hame, too soon.

But Canada with our Scottish blood was braw to settle
 In this country built by muckle Scots, o' a much tougher mettle
 Wi' hans daurk they carved out this new land (hans daurk = manual work)
 Nova Scotia, a name that forever will stand
 You and I my Jo were gie the chance
 Wi hope an' sair wark our life wad advance (sair wark = hard work)

Ah, Pam we've been a grand team
 Work'n as partners in our ain business scene
 And Canada rewarded us beyond our dreams.
 Ye managed the siller wi' great care
 Retired now let's hope there's enough t' spare.

Ilka time when we backward cast our e'e
 In our auld pictur'd beuks our days gone by we see
 Twa bonny bairns, wha becam' braw men
 Noo wi' their families we've been blest again
 They hae gie our lo'e mair chance to grow
 A hug frae our grandchildren sets our he'rts a glow
 Let's hope we live lang an' fier t' share (fier = healthy)
 In some o' Our Families' adventures an' cares.

December

December seems a somber month,
At least from nature's view:
The trees are bare; the flowers gone;
The birds that stay are few.

The stars that twinkle up above
Quite shiver in the cold.
The moon is just a sliver now,
An arc of burnished gold.

December's days are short and grey.
They're bleak, and cold, and drear.
It is only Winter's magic
That promises some cheer.

December watches Winter
As she dances through the night;
So lovely and dramatic,
She swirls and twirls in white.

Dressed in a gown of snowy lace,
She glides across the pond.
She transforms each drab blade and twig,
Waving her icy wand.

All nature shimmers at her touch,
She's done her magic now:
A lovely, frosty, wonderland.
Ah, Winter, take a bow!

Elegy fer Richard Fowler (Late President o' tha Glesca Haggis Club)

Cover tha mirrors lest they glimmer
 turn aff tha broth fram its simmer,
 celd winters cam, tho it be summer,
 an nane mae feed,
 we aw mae ken oorsels sair thinner,
 syne Dick is deid.

His joy the Bard o' Scotia's realm,
 a surest lead that steered his helm
 an wan he took wi airt tae learn,
 an tocht it weel
 an noo tho grief mae overwelme
 oor herts must steel.

Each tae his god must tell his soul,
 a feather's weight, weighed in tha bowl
 an guid an bad judged overall,
 wi moo agape;
 tho mony wish it, toll fer toll,
 thoar's nane escape.

But Dick haes naething tae fear,
 fer thase attendin shed a tear,
 an tell mony a tale an queer,
 o' Dick's favour
 his virtues plain, his gowd is cleer,
 fer aw mae savour.

Forgive birds singin in tha trees
 they ken naething o' oor disease,
 an dae nae hairm tho they mae tease,
 oor sense o' guid
 fer aw things natural mae please
 an quicken blud

Stoap aw tha clocks ther idle knell,
 silence tha rooms an muffle bell
 bring us heavan fram this hell
 syne Dick is deid,
 mak eech oor kin an constant tell,
 in act an deed.

Serpent's Loe-sang (tae ain or twa folk I ken)

How on the serpent's tongue tha lie,
 Must mak tha truth tae writhe an die,
 till its mither e'en wi' kennin' eye,
 caun-nae ken it,
 wi' ivry turn hurt, beat, then tae try
 tae surely kill it.

Thase serpent maisters wi' a tune
 git aip tha coils tae daunce an loon,
 as if were victims o' tha moon,
 in its fu glow,
 an dine on spew wi' wishin spoon,
 sic lies tae know.

Sae yoo an yurs wi spite an mane,
 wude mak a maun forgo his fame,
 an kick tha dirt in stoor an pain,
 mak yer ain skill,
 cos yoo affront an mak a stain,
 tae hauv yer fill.

Yer politics I scarce gie room,
 ye tak an' tak an' warp an' loom,
 till wi a makin' spin a womb,
 whoar births deceit,
 an in its seeds its ain spun tomb,
 fer Howdie's teat.

Gie us some credit we see hope,
 wher aw yoo see is little scope,
 an' wi a scaffold an' a rope,
 wude hing aw youth,
 an I wha see tha shades must cope,
 wi schemin' truth.

Constrict yer coils an' streech yer sicht,
 ah wude yer struck yer labours dicht,
 tae tak a route not derk, but bricht,
 tho I scarce think,
 yoo hae tha veeshun tae see licht,
 yer poisons stink.

Noo in yer stripes an' dimond skin,
 yer platitudes aire wearin' thin,
 tho yoo mae shed yer scales, 'tis sin,
 tae try tha law,
 yoo wi' tha slither wulnae win,
 we wull keep score.

A snake's a worm, whoar graws unkempt,
a sleekit slug wi salt is spent,
an yoo wi sillar quickly lent,
till aw is gaen,
but Diel's ain spawn is tha Serpent,
spare, halt and lame.

Address Tae The Trifle

Fair fa yer sweet and wondrous taste, cause a' thing willnae gang tae waste,
When drappit doon on the table placed, bowl, cream, an' spoon,
Yer worthy o' this sweetened grace, and be finished soon.

The puddin' bowl ye ower fill, yer smoothness it could mak me ill,
Yer thousand sprinkles ye know the drill, its just like seed,
The Drambuie vents lik fae the still, before we feed.

Her spoon is such a glorious sicht, it hovers ower wae murderous fricht,
Plunging with a daggers micht, the wound a slice,
Ma plate is full wae sweetness bricht, cauld, solid, nice!

So all around the table reach, tae snatch and pull the bowel stretch,
Their puggies are sae swollen screech, like a dancin' bean,
The wifie whae's about tae breach, should not be seen.

Is there that ower his cheesecake new, or crème brulee love me and you,
Or chocolate cake that wid rise anew, tae ruin the dinner,
We all wid smile wae righteous view, on the sinner!

Och look at him, scrapin' up his last, lickin' the bowl wae a tongue sae fast,
Scoorin' and cleanin' the sugar mash, his spoon wae guile,
Thro kitchen, lounge or lobby he'll thrash, but nae a smile.

But hark the hero o' the sweet, terra nova's just beneath his feet,
Clasp tae his bony haund a cleat, he'll hae it twirling,
And suits, an shirts, an skirts secrete, wae aw' the hurling.

Ye ladies wha mak this pudding rare, and spoon it oot wae loving care,
Canada wants nae tasteless fare, in bowls that stifle,
So, if ye grant her mair than air, gie her a Trifle! THE TRIFLE!

Address Tae Th' Chicken

Improvin' on ye wad be hard,
 Matriarch o' the poultry yard.
 Aboon them a', in high regard--
 Goose, duck, or coot--
 A grace to ye might crowd a card
 As lang's my foot!

The groaning bucket there ye fill:
 Drumsticks build a golden hill;
 Breasts and thighs stacked higher still;
 A crisp mound make--
 A reekin' centerpiece, until
 We all partake.

If skewered on rotisserie,
 Or stewed into a fricassee,
 Or barbequed--who canna see
 'Tis the real deal?
 Resounding sounds our happy glee
 At sic a meal!

Or, better yet, for true dominion,
 The neeps and tatties' boom companion--
 Who does not share the firm opinion
 Or doubts my word?
 The main course at a great reunion:
 The full-dressed bird!

The Guidman stands aboon the latter.
 The childrens' voices still their chatter.
 All eyn now focus on the platter
 And beaming wife.
 He deftly slices up the matter
 Wi' carving knife.

Nae laird nor king nor head o' state,
 Nae diplomat or potentate
 Can ask for better on his plate
 Tho' try he might.
 To truly open heaven's gate,
 A chicken's right!

Behold! The weel-fed army rides
 Who've had enough to split their sides--
 Fed chicken stews or guid pot pies--
 Great chicken dinners!

They hunt down any foe that hides;
 Come back winners.

What Pow'rs provide our daily bread,
 Ensure each day our mouths are fed,
 Remember what we all have said:
 It's finger-lickin'!
 Our prayer to Your ears please be sped:
 Gie us a chicken!

HERE'S WHAT THE MOOSE THOCHT O' RABBIE.
TO A PLOOMAN (WHO TURNED MY NEST)

IT'S YE AGAIN, YE CARELESS PLOOMAN
AND TYPICAL OF THOUGHTLESS HUMAN
IT'S NAE WONDER THAT I'M FUMIN
YOU'VE RUINED MA HOOSE
AND WEARY WINTER NOO IS LOOMIN
FOR MAN AND MOOSE.

BUT THOU ART BLESSED COMPARED WI' ME
A PLOOMAN AH WID RAITHER BE
AS DARKNESS FALLS, YOU CROSS THE LEA
TAE COTTAGE WARM
AND SAFE WITHIN AT CLOSE OF DAY
YOU'RE FREE FROM HERM.

BUT OOT HERE AH AM A' ALANE
AND PRESSED AGAINST A SHERLERN STANE
THE WIND THAT BLAWS WI' MIGHT AND MAIN
WID FREEZE MA HERT,
AND FRAE THIS LIFE O' JOY AND PAIN
AH FAIN WID PAIRT.

AH KEN YE SAY YOU DIDNA MEAN IT
MA WEE BIT HOOSE YOU HIDNA SEEN IT,
YIR EEN WERE ON A BONNIE LINNET
BUT GONE MA HAM,
TAE YOUR GREAT SHAME.

AH KEN YOU DINNA LACK COMPASSION,
HUMANITY YOU DIDNA RATION,
AND YOU HA GAED AGAINST THE FASHION,
TAE THINK O' US
TAE SPARE A NEST'S A FUNNY NOTION
SO WHY THE FUSS.

AND WHEN THE FIELDS GOT CAULD AND BARE,
AH SAW YOU WI' THE WOUNDED HARE
YOU TENDED IT WI' LOVIN' CARE
'TILL IT'S LAST BREATH,
AH'LL MIND YOU TOOK THE TIME TO SPARE
TAE EASE IT'S DEATH.

AND HUMBLE DAISY NEATH YIR HEEL
SOME SYMPATHY YOU'D TIME TAE FEEL,
IT'S BEAUTY SPENT
AND I AT LEAST DID KEN FU' WEEL
IT WISNA MEANT.

SO FARE THEE WEEL THOU HONEST MAN
AND I'LL FORGIVE YOU, IF AH CAN
THO' FEARFAE O' YE, AH HAE RUN
IN MINDLESS FRIGHT
WHATEVER ELSE O' YOU IS WRANG,
YIR HERT IS RIGHT.