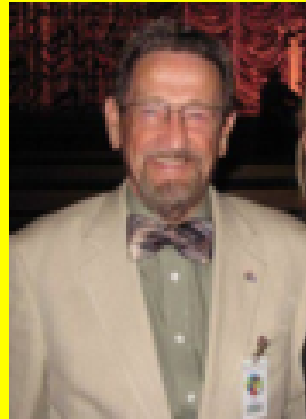




The Tattler



2022

Jack Hume

Heather and Thistle

Poetry Competition

Supplement

On the following pages are the entries in the 2022 Jack Hume, Heather and Thistle Poetry Competition.

The entries were reviewed blindly by a three member jury, which included last year's winner Jim Fletcher of the Halifax Burns Club, Willie Gibson, a member of the RBWF and well known figure within the Burns Community on both sides of the ocean, and Dr Moira Hansen, from the Centre for Robert Burns Studies at the University of Glasgow, and Reviews Editor for the Burns Chronicle.

1st Place

Holy Willie's Second Coming

An Unco Mournfu' Plea

Ye ken me weel, as fine I know it,
Ye worshipers o' Burns the poet,
Wha, quill in han', thocht little o' it, *hand*
 Tae blacken my name,
While branding me a '*hypocrite*' -
 Wi' wanton shame!

Well, here I am, returned at last,
In spirit-guise and sair downcast,
Twa hunder years an' mair now past,
 Since Willie died;
The time's now come for this outcaste
 Tae gie his side.

The Robert Burns of auld lang syne
Wad rhyme o' leafy woodbine twine,
Of linnet chants, or gowans fine, *daisies*
 And lambkins sweet;
Or sing o' maidens' charms divine,
 Then love entreat.

But as the years moved on awee
He'd oft berate poor chiels like me, *fellows*
And shame us wi' unbridled glee,
 For a' tae gloat:
Glib satire void o' sympathy,
 Scarce worth a groat. *minor coin*

Such slings and arrows, fast and free,
Were misdireckit, aimed at me...
A fine upstanding buckler, free *shield*
 O' Adam's sin!
God's scriptures were my guarantee *(Calvinism's doctrine of 'Election')*
 He'd let me in.

Some say I stole the poor-relief,
But nane cam up wi' ony prief; *proof*
E'en claims I'd steered young Meg, good grief, *seduced*
 I'll ne'er confess!
Foul rumours I'm a lyin' thief,
 I'll aye suppress.

I'm proud to say I spied for Auld *Mauchline's Minister 'Daddy' Auld*
That he might fornicators scauld,
And Sabbath-breakers, then so-called,
 Could join the queue;
Gau'n Hamilton was sair appalled *Gavin Hamilton, Burns' friend*
 At my "Et Tu!" *And you!*

'Orator Bob' took centre stage, *Hamilton's Advocate, Robert Aiken*
An' mobilized a war to wage;
The tulzie lasted sic an age - *dispute*
 Eight lang years.
The scoundrel won, to my outrage
 And bitter tears.

.....continued

Then Burns stepped up wi' glib delight,
Bedecked as onie Poet-Knight,
Weel armed in language to incite
Great ridicule,
That led to my disgrace, as might
The Cutty-Stool!

the Kirk's stool-of-repentance

Dear Lord, the Maker that I serve,
Thy laws I didna aye observe,
But whiles I aiblins did deserve
Thy just disdain,
Please spare me from Thy dread preserve -
The Mark o' Cain.

sometimes, maybe

And pardon me again for beggin',
E'en though my sins should be forgiven,
Ye've still tae let me in tae Heaven,
Lang since I died;
As Thine Elect it is a given...
I's sanctified!

*God's chosen,
I was*

Yon Burns, dear Lord, Thou sudna mind,
His satire aye was so unkind,
My character he much maligned,
Thou kens fu' well;
How can Thy servant be consigned
Tae brunstane Hell

should not

He claimed that I was aye bitch-fou...
Such slander, Lord, it wasna true;
A man o' grace can hae a few,
An' serve Thee well;
And should he court a jad or two,
Well, whase tae tell?

very drunk

*hussy
who's*

My sad demise, in flood an' snaw,
I swear was ne'er my faut ava;
Exhausted, draigl't in a shaw,
I cowped in a ditch...
Drowned, they say, or frozen raw,
Wha cares noo which?

*fault at all
soaked through, wood
fell*

O Lord, I's sure you'd tak me to Thee,
Or so I thought 'fore Thou forsook me,
But now you really must agree,
It's a' too silly!
Instruct Saint Peter by decree:
"Admit poor Willie".
Amen! Amen!

Ane mair plea...
As once I begged Thee punish Aiken,
Lord smite Rab Burns until he's quakin',
And swears he truly was mistaken,
In contrite prayer -
An' mak him gie an undertakin',
He'll rhyme nae mair.

*one
In "Holy Willie's Prayer"*

Note: In February 1809, Willie Fisher was found dead by the side of the road. He was walking home late at night through a heavy snowstorm after an evening of drinking at Mauchline. He is reputed to have lost his way and was drowned - or froze to death - after stumbling and falling into a flooded ditch. Dead drunk!

Copyright: Jim McLaughlin, Calgary Burns Club, July 2022

2nd Place

Twilight

Within the fog this frigid morn
A lark sings out, his heart forlorn
'Ere the sun, from east horizon torn
To grace the dew-kissed land
The new day's dawn is not yet born
From twilight's soft strong hand.

I hear the soft thrush gently weep
Among proud lilies lost in sleep
Where beastly wilds amid them creep
To shy from prying eyes
They pad along through green grass deep
'Neath starry, starry skies.

To be the bane of night and day
The harbinger of lost time lay
Wrapped 'round the half-moon o'er the quay
With wispy mystic shroud
Oh, sweet timeless shimmer stay
Oh, half-moon halo crowned!

But nay, I know, my answer's swift
And at sun's rise the fog will lift
To flood the lea with God-sent gift
Of morning's golden face
With wonderous light to soar adrift
Give life unto this place.

Like fleeting thoughts that quickly fade
A memory deep forever laid
Eternal moment God hath made
Although short-lived is glorious--
The debt that twilight left unpaid
Still reigns o'er all victorious!

Copyright: Paul Kennedy Jnr, South Jersey Celtic Society, July 2022

3rd Place Equal

Remember Islay

Remember the croft, solitary
Under the shadow of heaven
And the thistle, guarding
Closely in the eve
And the smoky peat
Haunting our senses
Burning slowly, within the confines of the grate.

And the dancing amber hues
Caressing the shadows
Forging the ancient stone
Kindly, to our touch
And we, enveloped
In the cloth of many colours
Spun solely
To ward off the evening chill.

And we sat gazing
Into the eyes of yesterday
Drowning, in the splendour
Of the poetry in the soul
Eyes so dark
Reflecting ancient wisdom
Ours only for an instant
But infinite and surreal.

Remember, distant pipes
Lamenting love departed
Muted chords of sorrow
Echoing through the glen
Haunting ancient ballads
Ebbing with the dusk
Swallowed by the mist
On heather covered hills.

And we, born of this land
Which our birthright gifted us
Embraced the glorious sacrifice
Of souls long gone
And we, living the lives' incarnate
Of every warrior bold
Gladly bore the consequence
Of battles lost and won.
Remember, we pledged our honour
To all monarchs of our crown
And graciously we toasted
Our country and its fate
And then we paid homage
To the water and the earth
And finally, we drank
Of the Pride and the Malt.

Copyright: Phyl Smith, St Andrew Society of Sarasota
Florida, July 2022

Inheritance of Genes.

As weel's they could wae awe their love
They taught me richt frae wrang,
They did their best tae school ma mind,
And shield me frae sair pangs,
They made me wise of thowless chieils,
Installed a weel-gaun gumption,
Showed me values ner reproached,
That mak' a conscience function.

But best of a' they bread a trait,
Beyond a learn'ed station,

A subject that's ner taught frae books,
Nor college education,
It's solved mair problems done mair guid,
Than ony theory's guidance,

Ma DNA is stappet fu,
Wae a haddin perseverance.

Copyright: Ronnie O'Byrne, HPBC/Niagara Falls BC,
July 2022

5th Place Equal

We (Still) Hae A Dream

Frae near, frae far they came
Winner taks a', loser gaes hame
But it's no just a game
Aye, we've been here afore
We precede oor ain fame
The Tartan Army an' more!

Sae near, yet sae far
Scotia's finest they are
But defeats left their scar
Could this be oor turn
Tae shine Scotia's star
Or agin crash an' burn?

It's been sic a lang road
Seeds ay hope hae been sow'd
Emotions ebb'd an' flow'd
Wi' team Israel in Glasgae
How proudly we strode
Aye, we sent them away!

But, then came Ukraine
A country in pain
Yet wi' muckle tae gain
How meekly we caved
Nae mair than mundane
Fir that dream sae craved!

The pipes played in tandem
As we sang oor ain Anthem
We're wi' them an' then some
Aye Qatar seemed sae near
But Ukraine left us numb
Oh Scotia ma dear!

Well what kin we say?
That copa del monde
Will be Scotia's wan day
Fir it's no jist a game
We'll keep ga'n onyway
Till it's oors tae proclaim!

Copyright: William Hardy, Caledonian Club of
San Francisco, July 2022

Voices

Their voices echo through the raws
As weans go kickin' baws aff wa's
The lassies sing aleerie sangs
An' caw their ropes
Skiddin' muck filled kiwi tins
Ower peevever's chalk

Last nicht they played at Kick the Can
Chapped some doors, an' aff they ran
Up the close an' through big Tam's
New planted spuds
He'll be spitin' bile an' jam
Ower breakfast toast

Wae summer, comes the guddlin' burn
While Ithers fish wae jars or wurms
Blue bare legs an' sheugh-soaked bums
An' rolled up sleeves
Wellies slap like squelchy drums
Aff calves and knees

Up the hill they'll fa' doon deid
Or hae a game o' hide an' seek
Or run their clanging gird and cleek
Ower clundy drains
Guidin' bogies wae their feet
Thru puddled rain

On Sunday, after mass or kirk
They trek thru wids - tae secret neuk
Doon tae whare the miners lurk
At pitch an' toss
Sneekin' peeps at evens luck
On half croon odds

Their playground has canals and bings
Quarries, brickworks, hame made swings
Cooncil hut an' putting greens
Wae auld bent clubs
Thrupenny bags o' green soor ploom
Or cola cubes

Lang simmer days, they bike or hike
Ower the hill by field lined dykes
Sometimes campin' oot all night
Wae maw pride piece
Jam or ham or fish paste spread
Atween plain breed

I've aften thought back tae these days
Wae kind regard tae simpler ways
How we just did - as us wanes pleased
An' grew up safe.....
Apart frae awe the hieds an' baines
We bumped an' grazed

Copyright: Ronnie O'Byrne, HPBC/Niagara Falls BC,
July 2022

Scotland The New

(One week before "The Scottish Vote For Independence")

I fare thee weel, my bonnie land, although I cannot feel with hand,
Beneath my feet, thy silver sand, a new beginning nigh,
The infiltrators gather strong, they come from near and far, so long,
And even though I do belong, I contemplate and sigh.

The blood of Scots, thinned through time, the nation multi, filled with rhyme,
From cultures that have reigned sublime, but our's, it will not die,
We have no strength to go alone, the future yes, we will atone,
And mixed we all will have a clone, so do not be so sly.

They are not ours, but what are we, pure no more, mixed I see,
The pride we hold, no longer free, yes we did but try,
To hold our status, in this world, every time our flag's unfurled,
And even though the straight is curled, majestic it will fly.

We are but one, a stoic race, they knew us with our granite face,
Softened now without a trace, the world slips slowly by,
A vote some say will break us free, but surely that is just not me,
I know that's not our legacy, stay strong and do not cry.

Our family frets with such a burden, to stay or just destroy this Union,
That has lived with patience in an eon, and hence I truly say,
Take care with such a given power, wisely in this given hour,
To set us free, or keep our flower, auld Scotia do not slay.

For when we're gone the legacy, will shift to those upon our knee,
Who'll take the chalice and keep us free, or as before we're locked in time,
So deeply in our culture prime, the story, verse and old scots glory,
From Aberdeen to Tobermory, reciting Burns and Auld Lang Syne.

Copyright: Henry Cairney, Calgary Burns Club, July 2022

8th Place

Fore or Five

Ya wee blasted dimpled hooking ball
Anither drive and I'm forced tae call
"FORE tae the left "tae wan an all
"duck yer heid, stay alive"
"Behin yon wall
Tak a dive"

I'll change ma stance, loosen my grip
Show this game some craftsmanship
Get roon the green whaur at least I can chip
Oh tae hit it straight, wid be awfy nice,
Ach no a chance no tae script
Oh geeze there goes a bloody slice!

Again im forced tae cry oot in shame
"FORE tae the right" its ma refrain
My dignity lost I must reclaim
But no when you slice!
"duck for cover" you must proclaim
An cover yer heid's ma best advice!

At last ive found the fairway turf
Took three tae get here, but sure enough
Its no quite so easy getting oot the rough.
Ah the fairway, whit a delight,
Och wait a minute-don't let me duff
That lie looks awfy tight!

"Hit the wee ball first then the big one"
Simple advice fae everyone
"pick it clean" that's anither tip that's owerdone
Fae aw yer golfin mates
But no sae easy tae get it done
As ill soon demonstrate!

Chunked it, topped it, whit ere ye want te ca' it
Whit ye expected different? A guid clean hit?
This games enough tae mak ye quit
But wait!- the balls still going
It may get there yet

Och no its sterted slowing
Whours it goin? Its disappeared
"show yer heid- PLEASE reappear
Och no! A bunker! Jist as a feared
"in front o' the green!!!"
I cursed an sneered
Damn that's awfy mean!

In a go wi ma digging tools
Nae touchin the sand, a ken the rules
Shut ma een, swing away, jist like aw the ither fools
An oot it pops!!!

I passed the test jist like in school
Towards the hole it jumps and hops

At last I've made it own the green
Tae wan put noo wid be awfy keen
But as bad as am playing that's no foreseen.
Tak yer time, line it up
Naebodys watching tae mak a scen
Knock it in the back o the cup!

Oh jings! Whours it goin? Certainly no whaur a had it
lined
Breaking hard an a doon hill, sharely a mist be goin
blind!
I hate this game, its so unkind
Give it up a think!
Pack it in I am inclined
Head tae the clubhouse a need a drink!

One last putt, aboot ten feet
Ive hit it pure, ive hit it sweet
And In it goes- whit a treat
No sae bad-im still alive
Noo if I can only jist repeart
Think I'll put me doon fir a FIVE!!!

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Additional Entries

Hogmanay

It is said that Hogmanay is a Pagan ritual
No one really knows its derivation
All I know is that it is very spiritual
And has helped to shape the Scottish Nation.

The ritual starts on the thirty-first
We clean the hoose and, of course, oursells
It's a way of building up a thirst
While patiently waiting for the bells".

Yes, we do not drink til after 12 is here
Then we raise our glass tae one another
Wish everyone a Guid New Year
And hug everyone like a brother.

Each shares his bottle and drinks a toast
On it goes, just roon and roon
Until we get a signal from the host
That it's time to eat - "Cmon, sit doon".

Steak Pie and tatties is the norm
And all is eaten in quite a haste
By those in a hurry to perform
Or wanting to get back their whisky taste.

Then it's time to sing y'er ain wee song
Or play the banjo, or do a recitation.
To show that you really do belong
You have to perform without hesitation.

A knock on the door, and a 'first foot' is here
Bottle in hand, a lump of coal and a black bun.
Your very first visitor of the New Year
A new face and voice always increases the fun.

Of course you could first foot yersel
To a neebor or a friend it didn't matter
Whisky brought you out o' yer shell
And increased the quality - or quantity of your patter.

Copyright: Diane Kemp (on behalf of the late Robert Kemp), Caledonian Club Sarasota, July 2022

A Scot Abroad

(On learning the history of the early Scots Trappers in Canada)

Now what would induce, his power to seduce, maid's
from subservient times,
A new country sure, but his standing so pure, with the
braves and intensified crimes.

As an insider who, could set up me and you, I wonder
what makes it a blast,
The reaction will tell, all the poems we'll sell, outlive us
all and last.

The new land we see, opportunities free, stolen without
by your leave,
Strange creatures new, around in clear view, profit they
all will just thieve.

Now further they spread, breaking more bread, with tribes
across this great land,
Taking more wives, sometimes with knives, creating a
Metis new band.

Life sure is strange, as they ride on the range, part of a
new country formed,
Joined so much more, from countries so tore, government
policy scorned.

But we must move on, and build upon, regardless of truth
or a fraud,
Whatever the thought, answers or not, it's back there with
A Scot Abroad.

Copyright: Henry Cairney, Calgary Burns Club, July 2022

Today

I'm sitting here and thinking of what it's like today.
And what would Robert Burns, the poet, have to say.
The computer, TV, and the phone, all are digitized.
When they work all is well, when they don't it's
frazzled.

The TV is rarely at its best, most time it's very sleezy.
It seems that class has gotten lost in an atmosphere of
queezy.
And yet we still look at it, despite the irritation.
You'd think we'd not put up with the aggravation.

I'm sure the Bard would find the words to quill the sick-
ened spirit.
That leaves us in a saddened mood, frustrated and not
with it!
Perhaps he'd turn to nature. It's just beyond our door.
He'd write about the little birds and the food they're look-
ing for.

He'd notice all the flowers that are blooming in the sun.
And the lovely shades of sunset when the day is done.
In the end he'd turn to God and bless Him for His crea-
tion.
For all the earth is ours for respite and recreation.

**Copyright: Patricia (Pat) Moffitt, Robert Burns Society
of Annapolis, July 2022**

Daur Ye Compare!

They call it "Scotch", in general true,
But blends and Malt, tae me and you,
Then the spelling it is so sad,
"Whisky", or "Whiskey", just makes me sad.

The TV channels, are thousands strong,
But och the "Ads", are far too long,
Whit happened tae, the mirth and fun,
Like "Scotch and Wry", at New Years run.

The fitba here is oval shape,
But me the round yin, tak's the cake,
The claites they wear, are modern true,
But gie me ma kilt, in rustic blue.

The food is healthy, wi salads here,
But guid auld haggis, my trusty fiere,
The gowf in courses, prim and neat,
But auld St Andrews will hae ye beat.

They curl lik' champions, of that's nae dout,
But we invented, it is oor root,
They call them cookies, like a' the rest,
But shortbread fingers, oor's are the best.

They say that 'Bannocks' are from first nations,
But we all know its Scot traditions,
I like the baseball, they claim they're founders,
Again we know it came fae rounders.

The beer's nae bad, if on the bevvvy,
But ah still miss my pint o' heavy,
The oil's synthetic, between you and me,
No' pure I'll state, like the auld North Sea.

I gie them this, their mountains high,
Beat onything, fae Perth tae Skye,
Their lakes are monsters sure we see,
But we huv the real yin in 'Auld Nessie'.

Roads sae straight ye can see for miles,
whilst oor's are bendy, wi loads o' styles,
Their lugs are warm under the 'Toque',
But ma auld scots bonnet's a better look,

I guess ma friends, are so integrated,
That's no tae judge through bias that's slated,
Now a Canadian, ma lives wae a future,
Thit will only guide me, lord hallelujah.

**Copyright: Henry Cairney, Calgary Burns Club, July
2022**