

A Wheen O Wurds



**AN ULSTER-SCOTS POETRY AND
SHORT STORY RESOURCE FOR
KEY STAGES 3 & 4**

PART 1

Welcome to this poetry and short story resource.

Some of the poems were written by the world-famous Scottish poet Robert Burns who lived in the 18th century. Others are by the Nobel-prizewinning Ulster poet Seamus Heaney and the well-respected Ulster-Scots poet, James Fenton. There are also other poems and extracts by less well-known Ulstermen and women.

Some of the writing is in Scots or Ulster-Scots while others are written by Ulster-Scots writers using Ulster English. There are also some poems by world-famous English poets such as Shakespeare and Shelley which are linked with Ulster-Scots poems on the same topics.

Finally there are some research tasks and activities for you to try. ENJOY!

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Who was Robert Burns?



Robert Burns, or Rabbie Burns as he is sometimes called, is the most famous poet Scotland has ever produced. He is still remembered all over the world even though he has been dead for over 200 years. His life and poetry are celebrated every year on Burn's Night , 25th January.

Burns was associated with the Weaver Poets of County Antrim who wrote in Ulster– Scots. They admired his poetry and it is thought Burns may even have visited Ulster.

Use your **internet detective skills** to find out the answers to these questions about Burns:

1. When was Robert Burns born?
2. Where was he born?
3. What were the names of his parents?
4. Robert had 3 brothers and 3 sisters. Can you find their names?
5. What was the name of Burns' first teacher?
6. Where did the family move to after the death of Burns' father in 1784?
7. Whom did Burns plan to marry in 1785?
8. What was the real name of his love 'Clarinda'?
9. When did Burns die?
10. What was the name of his son who was born 4 days after Robert died?



WEBSITES TO HELP YOU

<http://www.robertburns.plus.com/Chronology.htm>

<http://www.rabbie-burns.com/theman/index.htm>

<http://www.rabbie-burns.com/index.cfm>

Your Tasks:

CREATE A POWERPOINT PRESENTATION AND GIVE A TALK ON ROBERT BURNS

Now that you have visited various websites and found the answers to the questions about Robert Burns, your task is to create an interesting PowerPoint presentation to illustrate a 3-minute talk to your class about his life and his poetry.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- Everyone in your class has found the answers to the same questions - you might want to do some additional research so that you can give some extra information and add interesting detail to your talk
- Design your PowerPoint to add to your talk—it's not just a matter of reading what is on each slide to your audience. They can do that for themselves!
- Do not put large chunks of text on a slide.
- Use sound, graphics and animation sparingly. Less is more in a PowerPoint.
- If you need help use the '[Making a PowerPoint Help Guide](#)'.



Many poems either start as songs or, because of their rhythm and rhyme pattern, are set to music. Many of Burns' poems have been sung. You will find some of these on the following pages..

John Anderson, My Jo

John Anderson, my jo, John,
When we were first acquaint;
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonie brow was brent;
But now your brow is beld, John.

Your locks are like the snaw;
But blessings in your frosty pow,

John Anderson, my jo.

John Anderson, my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither;
And mony a cantie day, John,
We've had wi' ane anither:
Now we maun totter down, John.

And hand in hand we'll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson, my jo

Charlie's, He's My Darling

Twas on a Monday morning,
Right early in the year,
That Charlie came to our town,
The young Chevalier.

CHORUS:

An' Charlie, he's my darling,
My darling, my darling,
Charlie, he's my darling,
The young Chevalier.
As he was walking up the street,
The city for to view,
O there he spied a bonie lass
The window looking through,
CHORUS

Sae light's he jumped up the stair,
And tirl'd at the pin;
And wha sae ready as herself'
To let the laddie in.
CHORUS

He set his Jenny on his knee,
All in his Highland dress;
For brawly weel he ken'd the way
To please a bonie lass.
CHORUS

It's up yon heathery mountain,
An' down yon scroggie glen,
We daur na gang a milking,
For Charlie and his men.
CHORUS

Green Grow The Rashes

CHORUS

Green grow the rashes, O;
 Green grow the rushes, O;
 The sweetest hours that e'er I spend,
 Are spent among the lasses, O.

There's nought but care on ev'ry han',
 In ev'ry hour that passes, O:
 What signifies the life o' man,
 An' 'twere na for the lasses, O.

The war'ly race may riches chase,
 An' riches still may fly them, O;
 An' tho' at last they catch them fast,
 Their hearts can ne'er enjoy them, O.

But gie me a cannie hour at e'en,
 My arms about my dearie, O;
 An' war'ly cares, an war'ly men,
 May a' gae tapsalteerir, O!

For you sae douce, ye sneer at this;
 Ye're nought but senseless asses, O:
 The wisest man the warl' e'er saw,
 He dearly lov'd the lasses, O.

Auld Nature swears, the lovely dears
 Her noblest work she classes, O:
 Her prentice han' she try'd on man,
 An' then she made the lasses, O.



INTERESTING THOUGHT

There is a tradition that the term or nickname 'gringo' used by Mexicans to refer to Americans comes from this song. There were Scots and Scots-Irish at the Siege of the Alamo in Texas and they sang this song. The Mexicans misheard the phrase 'Green grow' as 'Gringo' and started using the word to refer to the Americans.

A MAN'S A MAN FOR A' THAT

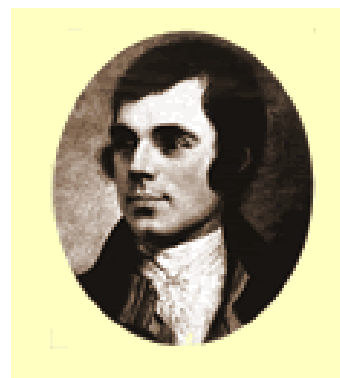
Is there for honest poverty
That hings his head, an' a' that;
The coward slave—we pass him by,
We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, an' a' that.
Our toils obscure an' a' that,
The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The Man's the gowd for a' that.

What though on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hoddin grey, an' a' that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their
wine;
A man's a Man for a' that:
For a' that, and a' that,
Their tinsel show, an' a' that;
The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
Is king o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie, ca'd a lord,
Wha struts, an' stares, an' a' that;
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
He's but a coof for a' that:
For a' that, an' a' that,
His ribband, star, an' a' that:
The man o' independent mind
He looks an' laughs at a' that.

A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, an' a' that;
But an honest man's abon his might,
Gude faith, he maunna fa' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their dignities an' a' that;
The pith o' sense, an' pride o' worth,
Are higher rank than a' that.

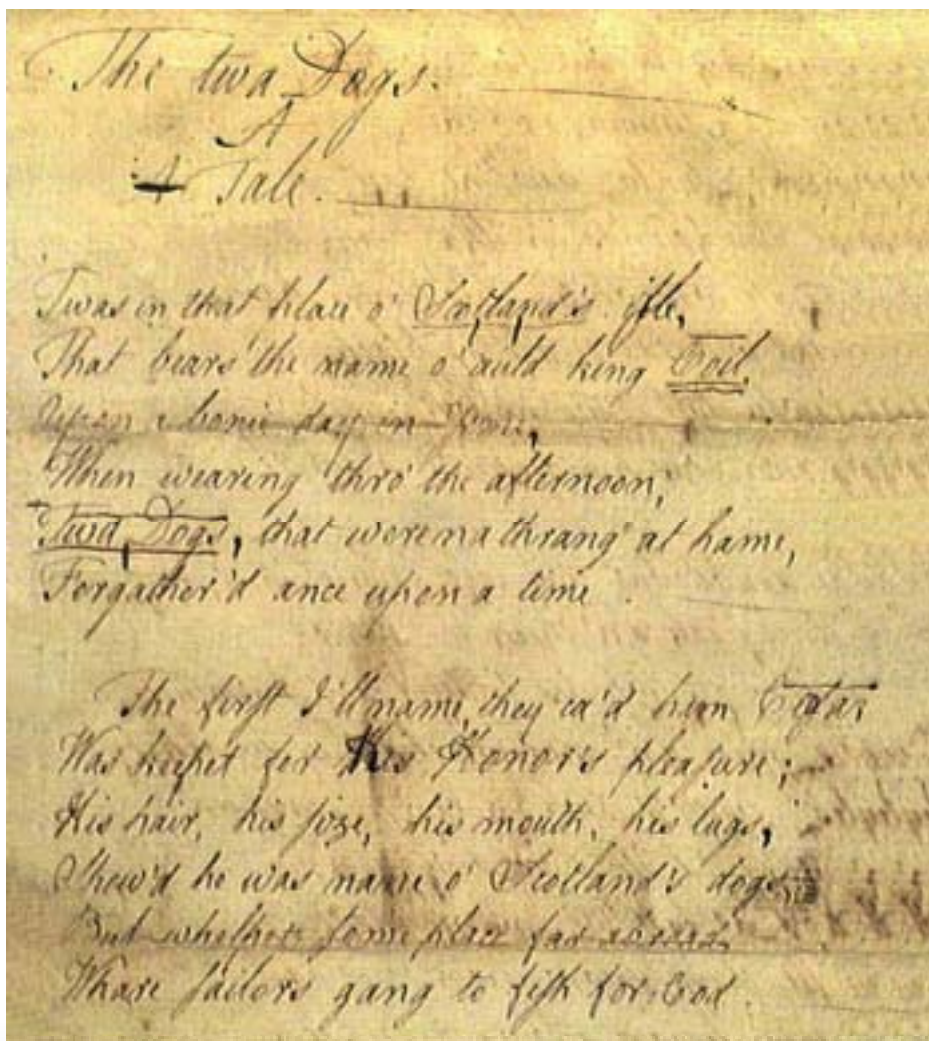
Then let us pray that come it may,
(As come it will for a' that,)
That Sense and Worth, o'er a' the
earth,
Shall bear the gree, an' a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
It's coming yet for a' that,
That man to Man, the world o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that.



Robert Burns

The Twa Dogs

- This is one of Robert Burns' most admired poems.
- It was written some time early in 1786 and was composed after Burns' favourite dog, Luath, had been killed just the night before Burns' own father died.
- The poet wanted to include in his published work something that would mark his affection for his canine friend.
- Below is a picture of the manuscript of the poem in Burns' handwriting.
- On the next page you will find an extract from the poem about the dogs, one called Caesar and the other Luath.



The Twa Dogs

'Twas in that place o' Scotland's isle,
That bears the name o' auld king COIL,
Upon a bonie day in June,
When wearing thro' the afternoon,
Twa Dogs, that were na thrang at
hame,
Forgather'd ance upon a time.
The first I'll name, they ca'd him
Caesar,
Was keepet for His Honor's pleasure;
His hair, his size, his mouth, his lugs,
Shew'd he was nane o' Scotland's
dogs,
But whalpet some place far abroad,
Where sailors gang to fish for Cod.
His locked, letter'd, braw brass-collar
Shew'd him the gentleman an' scholar;
But tho' he was o' high degree,
The fient a pride na pride had he,
But wad hae spent an hour caressan,
Ev'n wi' a Tinkler-gipsej's messan:
At Kirk or Market, Mill or Smiddie,
Nae tawted tyke, tho' e'er sae duddie,
But he wad stan't as glad to see him,
An' stroan't on stanes an' hillocks wi'
him.
The tither was a ploughman's collie,



A rhyming, ranting, raving billie,
Wha for his friend an' comrade had
him,
And in his freaks had Luath ca'd him,
After some dog in Highland sang,
Was made lang syne, lord knows how
lang.
He was a gash an' faithfu' tyke,
As ever lap a sheugh or dyke,
His honest, sonsie, baws'nt face,
Ay gat him friends in ilka place;
His breast was white, his towzie back,
Weel clad wi' coat o' glossy black;
His gawsie tail, wi' upward curl,
Hung owre his hurdles wi' a swirl.
Nae doubt but they were fain o' ither,
An' unco pack an' thick thegither;
Wi' social node whyles snuff'd an'
snowket;
Whyles mice and modewurks they
howket;
Whyles scour'd awa in lang excursion,
An' worry'd ither in diversion;
Till tir'd at last wi' mony a farce,
They set them down upon their arse,
An' there began a lang digression
About the lords o' the creation.



The Twa Dogs



Listen to the reading of part of the poem by Robert Burns. called 'The Twa Dogs'.

Now listen again and try to work out what some of the words from the poem which come from the Scots language mean.

Look at the words in column A. Now write what you think the word means in column B.

You do not have to find one word which means the same. You might need to use a phrase to explain what the word means.

Remember

Words may have more than one meaning or use.

For example you may know what the word 'gang' normally means.

But is that what it means in this poem?

The Twa Dogs

COLUMN A

COLUMN B

thrang	
lugs	
whalpet	
gang	
braw	
fient	
messan	
kirk	
smiddie	
tawted	
tyke	
duddie	
stroan't	
tither	
billie	
freaks	
gash	
lap	
sheugh	
sonsie	
bawsn't	
towzie	
gawsie	
snowket	
modewurks	
howket	
scour'd	
farce	
lang	
fient	

Twa Dogs Tasks

In groups try to work out what the following words from the poem mean:



Robert Burns wrote his poems in Scots.

Ulster-Scots is the name given to the language brought over from Scotland and spoken in parts of Ulster.

The Rhyming Weavers who you are going to find out about often wrote in Ulster-Scots.

thrang	lugs	whalpet	gang	braw	fient
messan	kirk	smiddie	tawted	tyke	duddie
stroan't	tither	billie	freaks	gash	lap
sheugh	sonsie	baws'nt	towzie	gawsie	snowket
mode-wurks	howket	scour'd	farce	lang	fient

Remember

You do not have to know the exact meaning of the word.

When you are faced with words you do not know in a passage or poem you can often work out the sense of what they mean from the overall gist of what is happening in the poem or story.

Twa Dogs Tasks

Now that you have read an extract from Burns' poem 'The Twa Dogs' you have a choice of follow-up activities.

- Write a story with the title "The Twa Dogs".
- Write a story with a dog as the central character. You can make up your own title.
- Research the collie dog breed and create a leaflet for people thinking of a getting a pet and considering a collie.
- Draw a cartoon strip about the adventures of a dog.
- Organise and take part in a debate with the motion:

"This house believes keeping dogs is no longer socially acceptable."



Auld Lang Syne

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne!

Chorus:
For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne.
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.
And surely ye'll be your pint stowp!
And surely I'll be mine!
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

Chorus
We twa hae run about the braes,
And pou'd the gowans fine;
But we've wander'd mony a weary fit,
Sin' auld lang syne.

Chorus
We twa hae paidl'd in the burn,
Frae morning sun till dine;
But seas between us braid hae roar'd
Sin' auld lang syne

Chorus
And there's a hand, my trusty fere!
And gie's a hand o' thine!
And we'll tak a right gude-willie
waught,
For auld lang syne.



Address To A Haggis

Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face,
Great chieftain o' the pudding-race!
Aboon them a' yet tak your place,
Painch, tripe, or thairm:
Weel are ye wordy o'a grace
As lang's my arm.

The groaning trencher there ye fill,
Your hurdies like a distant hill,
Your pin was help to mend a mill
In time o'need,
While thro' your pores
The dewes distill like amber bead.

His knife see rustic labour dight,
An' cut you up wi' ready sleight,
Trenching your gushing entrails bright,
Like ony ditch;
And the, O what a glorious sight,
Warm-reekin', rich!

Then, horn for horn,
They stretch an' strive:
Deil tak the hindmost! On they drive,
Till a' their weel-swallow'd kytes believe
Are bent like drums;
Then auld Guidman,
Maist like to rive,
Bethankit! Hums.

Is there that owre his French ragout
Or olio that wad staw a sow,
Or fricassee wad make her spew
Wi' perfect sconner,
Looks down wi' sneering, scornful'
view,
On sic a dinner?

Poor devil! See him owre his trash,
As feckles as wither'd rash,
His spindle shank, a guid whip-lash;
His nieve a nit;
Thro' bloody flood or field to dash,
O how unfit!

But mark the Rustic, haggis-fed,
The trembling earth resounds his tread.
Clap in his walie nieve a blade,
He'll mak it whistle;
An' legs an' arms, an' hands will sned,
Like taps o' trissle.

Ye pow'rs, wha mak mankind your care,
And dish them out their bill o' fare,
Auld Scotland wants nae skinking ware
That jaups in luggies;
But, if ye wish her grateful' prayer
Gie her a haggis!

ROBERT BURNS



Extension Activity

The poem 'Address to a Haggis' is recited each year at Burns' Suppers.

Your task is to research how Burns' Night is celebrated.

You will need to find out:

- The date of Burns' Night
- What food is traditionally served at a Burns' Supper
- What other poetry or speeches are traditional on this occasion

Why not?

In groups plan a celebration for Burns Night in your class?

You could have some traditional Scottish food and recite some of the poems.



Here are some websites to help you get started:

www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/history/burnsnight/

www.rabbie-burns.com/burnssupper/

www.britainusa.com/faq/showfaq.asp?SID=267

www.geocities.com/traditions_uk/burnsnight.html

www.bbc.co.uk/food/news_and_events/events_burnsnight.shtml

Who were the Weaver Poets?



The Weaver Poets is the name given to a group of mainly uneducated working class male writers in the mid 18th to mid 19th centuries in Ulster. The best known are David Herbison from near Ballymena in County Antrim, Hugh Porter from near Banbridge in County Down and James Orr from near Larne in County Antrim.

The Weavers were part of the Scottish literary tradition. Some people have called them imitators of Robert Burns but in fact some of them were already writing before Burns.

They were either published in local newspapers or their work was sold by subscription. This means they were published in limited edition books and paid for by patrons or subscribers. Because of this much of their poetry has been lost.

The poems of the Weavers were often written in the vernacular language (the ordinary language of the people, which in their case was Ulster-Scots) and sometimes in the standard English of their day.

Among the Weaver poets were:

JAMES ORR:

Born in 1770 in a thatched cottage near Ballycarry in County Antrim.

HUGH PORTER:

Born around 1780 in the townland of Moneyslane near Rathfriland.

SAMUEL THOMSON:

Born in 1766 at Lyle's Hill, Carngranny near Templepatrick in County Antrim. He was unusual among the Weaver poets because he was not a weaver! In fact he was a schoolmaster.

Find out

The Weaver Poets were often known as the bards of their local area e.g. James Orr was known as the Bard of Ballycarry.

Find out what the word 'BARD' means.

TO THE CUCKOO

Again I hear thy hollow song,
Coo'd softly from the rural grove;
And Echo, lone, the glens among,
Repeating wild they notes of love.

Once more to thee I fondly pay
The artless song, inspire'd by thine;
But I must own thy charming lay
Is worth a thousand such as mine.

Yet such as 'this, O, take it kind,
(I sing to please no critic elf;
My simple sonnet, unrefin'd,
Flows only to amuse myself.)

Here, as by parent Lyle I rove,
Collecting Fancy's humble flowers,
Thy soothing song, from Granny's
grove,
Enlivens sweet my noontide hours.

The little minstrels fondly come,
And perching near thee, seem to say,
"For thee we have prepar'd a home,
Sweet Laureate of the flow'ry May."

Is there, who deaf to thy soft note,
Can call thee worthless, clam'rous
fool?
Yes, there are such, full many a goat,
That never conn'd at Nature's school.

When from lone tree, in sunny waste,
On day serene thou'rt heard to sing,
He who the rapture cannot taste,
Is but a cur tho call'd a king.

Sweet bird, exulting, sing aloud,
Thru' every green wood, glade and
glen,
No more thou meet'st a quarrelling
crowd.

But TRUE UNITED IRISHMEN!*

While I can taste the sweets of May,
And rural muse remains with me,
Inspir'd by thy harmonious lay,
An annual song I'll pay to thee.

by Samuel Thomson



** This verse only appears in the edition of this poem which was printed in the Northern Star newspaper 15-19 May 1797.*

TO A SKYLARK

Below is an extract from a poem by Percy Shelley. Shelley was an early 19th century English poet. He lived for a time in Ireland and was involved in political writing, for example supporting the French Revolution.

Hail to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated
art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The deep blue thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring
ever
singing.

In the golden light'ning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is
just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven,
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy
shrill delight.

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear
Until we hardly see—we feel that it is
there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and
heaven is overflow'd.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain
of melody.



TO A SPARROW

ON SEEING SOME BOYS ROB HER NEST

Below is another extract. This time it is taken from a longer poem by James Orr, one of the Weaver Poets.

Wee, wanton, little thought o' birdie!
Pert, keen an' crouse, an unco wordie,
The stapple that sae lang has co'erd
ye
Your faes are seisin';
Shame fa' them! Can they no afford ye
The cauld house easin'?

What head o' wit, wi' sev'n year lear,
Cou'd mak' a nest sae feat, an' fair?
Eydent thou gather't grass an' hair,
Frae daun till dark;
Fou scar's, when school-boys canc'd
to stae
Upo' thy wark.

Mony a day's hunger didst thou see,
While sittin' close as close cou'd be;
Yet now before thy anxious e'ee
They've rack'd thy housie,
An' made thy helpless familie
The prey o' pousie.

E'enow thy breast is just as sair
As wife's wad be, wha'd see, or hear,
Sic fate, perforce, befa' her dear
An' dauted weans;
But och! Thy troublers dinna care
How vast thy pains!

Thou needna think this outrage odd,
For man's to man, like goose and tod;
But still the brave will repaine, blood,
An' guile bewaur o',
An' spare the creature o' their God,
Tho' but a Sparrow.

by James Orr
The Bard of Ballycarry



In 'To a Skylark', 'To the Cuckoo' and 'To a Sparrow', the poets are writing about nature. This is a very popular topic for poetry.

Now either:

- Make your own anthology of poems about nature. You will need to look through many poetry books and perhaps also on the Internet.
- Select 6 poems that you like and word process them into an anthology.
- Select a title for your anthology
- Write an introduction which should include the reasons for your choices and something about each of the poets

Or

- Produce a PowerPoint to be used for a performance of a nature poem.
- This might include the use of some photographs which you take yourself using a digital camera or you could use images from the internet.
- Add appropriate background music and a reading of the poem to go along with the images.



The Irish cottier's Death and Burial

His strength here fail'd, but affection's e'e
Spak on; a moment motionless he lay;
Bade "Peace be wi' them!" turn'd his head
awee,
And pass'd through death's dark vale
without dismay.
The speechless widow watch'd the
stiff'ning clay,
And shed some "nat'ral tears" - rack'd, yet
resign'd;
To loud laments the orphan group gied way,
An' mourn'd, unfelt, the wants an' wrangs
they'd find,
Flung friendless on the warl, that's seldom
unco kind.

Erin! My country! Preciously adorn'd
With every beauty and with worth,
Thy grievances through time will not be
scorn'd,
For powerful friends to plead they cause
step forth:
But more unblest, oppression, want, and
dearth,
Did during life, distressfully attend
The poor neglected native of they North,
Whose fall I sing. He found no powerful
friend,
'Till Death was sent by Heaven to bid his
soul ascend.

The blameless Cottier, wha his youth had
pass'd
In temperance, an' felt few pains when auld,
The prey o' pleurisy, lies low at last,
And aft his thoughts are by delerium
thrall'd:
Yet while he raves, he prays in words weel
wal'd,
An' mutters through his sleep o' truth an'
right;
An' pondering deep, the weens are tald
The readiest way he thinks they justly might
Support themsels thro' life, when he shall
sink in night.

"Be honest an' obligin'; if ye thrive
Be meek; an' firm whan crosses come your
road;
Should rude men wrang ye, to forgie them
strive;
Scorn nae poor man wha bears
oppression's load,
Nor meanly cringe for favours frae the
proud,
In ae short sentence—serve baith man an'
God.
Sae, whan your clay lies mould'rin in a
shroud,
Your saul shall soard to heaven, an' care
nae mair becloud.

Erin! My country! While they green sward
gilds
The good man's grave, whose fall I strove
to sing,
Ten thousand Cottiers, toiling on thy wilds,
Prize truth and right 'bove ev'ry earthly
thing:
Full many a just man makes thy work-shops
ring
Full many a bright man strips thy meads to
mow;
Closer in thy
distress to thee
they cling;
And though their
fields scarce
daily bread
bestow,
Feel thrice more
peace of mind
than those who
crush them low.

by JAMES ORR



The Persecuted Negro

WISDOM's spurn'd, and lonely silence
Keeps our Chapel clos'd by pride.
What was heard, that, Chiefs! Your
vi'lence
Parts the Negro and his Guide?
Did you think to keep us pray'less,
Lest Heav'n's King should hear
our cry?
Or that Truth would make us fearless
In the cause of Liberty?

Impious men! Had Fortune made you
Slaves in Africa, many a Chief,
Charitably would persuade you
To embrace his false belief;
You, who should be heard deploring
Our wild errors, wield your rod,
To prevent us from adoring,
With ourselves, the living God.

When to "teach all human creatures,"
Truth's disciples orders got,
Was it added—"Mark the features
"Of the slave, and 'mend him not."
GOD, whose pity sees the sparrow
Perish, as 'tis earthward roll'd,
Values this poor soul you "harrow"
More than all your island's gold.

Droves of slaves expos'd to auction,
Ne'er made your hard hearts so vain,
As would ours be, were instruction
Granted our misguided train:
If in them you'd knowledge cherish,
We'd to Ignorance submit;
You'll be punish'd if they perish;
To improve them we're unfit.

In the host that woos commotion,
In the sea-encircled fleet,
In the dungeon, pure devotion
Gives the Good communion sweet:
Ev'ry wretch, in ev'ry region,
May inquire for heav'nly truths,
Save the Negro; him Religion,
With her Sabbath never soothes.

Mayn't the meanest in the nations
That debasement deepest galls,
When they see all rank's gradations
End at once, when Worship calls;
And 'tis deem'd no rude intrusion
To approach the proud man's pew,
Pray to 'scape the persecution
Our souls suffer for our hue?

James Orr was one of the "Weaver Poets". This might seem to suggest that these men were uneducated weavers only interested in country issues. Not all were weavers and some, like Orr, had much wider social interests. Here is a poem he wrote about slavery after reading a letter from Jamaica which forbade missionaries and churches to teach slaves.



The Persecuted Negro

Never may the Missionary,
When sore toil at night we leave,
Promise Heav'n's rest to the weary,
And Heav'n's freedom to the slave;
Ne'er, with anxious expectation,
From the book we'll hear him read,
How poor tribes, forc'd from their
nation,
From Captivity were freed.

Thou! Who scorn'd'st not with our
features
To create a deathless part;
Curbing our outrageous natures,
May we shine, when white men smart!
And, though they prolong our
blindness,
Who should light for us provide;
Let thy peace-imparting kindness,
Be our heart's immediate guide!



Poetry and Social Issues

Many poets down the years have used their art to draw attention to social issues, for example Wilfred Owen wrote of the horrors of war being suffered by the ordinary soldiers during the First World War and, back in the 19th century, Thomas Hood wrote “The Song of the Shirt” which highlighted the issue of sweatshop labour which is still very much a Third World issue today.



Task

Begin by the whole class brainstorming social issues of interest to young people today. Make a list.

Now.....

- Individually or in pairs research one of the issues identified
(The list should be divided up so that all topics are covered)
- Prepare an information leaflet for the rest of your class so that everyone in the class learns about all the different issues you have identified

The Simmer Fair

Here are some verses from a longer poem by Samuel Thomson called “Simmer Fair (As it is held in T_P_K, In the manner of Burns)”.

This shows that Thomson knew Robert Burns’ poetry well and chose to use his style and base his poem on Burns’ poem “Holy Fair” using the Christus Kirk form.

A Summer Fair was held in Templepatrick in the 18th/19th centuries. This photograph shows a modern summer fair—the Oul Lammas Fair in Ballycastle.

On auld Hibernia’s northern side,
Whar corn and barley grow,
Whar pebbly, winding streamlets glide
An’ oxen graze and lowe;
Laigh in a vale there hauds a fair,
As monie folks do ken,
Whar lads an’ lasses ay repair
The Simmer day to spend
In sport and glee.

T’inspire the bardie at this time,
Apollo be’t thy care,
That he in Norland, measured rhyme,
May sing the *Simmer-fair*;
Whar monie folks together hie,
Baith married anes an’ single,
Auld age and youth, wife, man an’ boy
A’ hobbling intermingle
In crowds this day.

Here grey-clad farmers, gash an’
grave
Drive in their sleekit *hawkeys*;
With monie a flee, auld-farrant knave,
To sell their heftit *brockeys*;
An’ Jockey louns, sae gleg an’ gare
Wi’ boot be-deckit legs,
To glow’r an’ drink, cheat, lie an’
swear
An’ sell their glossy *naigs*
Come here this day.



Here countra’ chiels, dock’d aff
compleat,
Weel sheath’d in Sunday claes,
Sae trimly as they pace the street,
In shoen as black as slaes; -
The lasses fain, come stringing in
Frae a’ parts o’ the country,
Ilk ane as feat’s a new made prin -
Ye’d tak them a’ for gentry,
Sae fine this day!

The Passengers

by James Orr



Some verses from a longer poem written by James Orr, describing the plight of those Ulster-Scots forced to leave Ireland and head to America after the 1798 Rebellion.

How calm an' cozie is the wight,
Frae cares an' conflicts clear ay,
Whase settled headpiece never made,
His heels or han's be weary!
Perplex'd is he whase anxious
schemes
Pursue applause, or siller,
Success nor sates, nor failure tames;
Banded frae post to pillar
Is he, ilk day.

As we were, Comrades, at the time
We mov't frae Ballycarry,
To wan'er thro' the woody clime
Burgoyne gied oure to harrie:
Wi' frien's consent we priet a gill,
An' monie a house did call at,
Shook han's an' smil't; tho' ilk
fareweel
Strak, like a weighty mallet,
Our hearts, that day.

On shore, while ship-mates halt, tho'
thrang't,
Wi' lasses heart to barter;
Nybers, an' frien's, in boatfu's pang't,
Syne speel the side, an' down the
hatch
To rest, an' crack, an' gaze on
The boles o' births, that monie a
wretch
Maun squeeze in, for a season,
By night, an' day.

"This is my locker, yon'ers Jock's,
"In that auld creel, sea-store is,
"Thir births beside us are the Lockes,*
"My uncle's there before us;
"Here hang my tins an' vitriol jug,
"Nae thief's at han' to meddle 'em"-
"L—d, man, I'm glad ye're a' sae snug;
"But och! 'tis owre like Bedlam
Wi' a' this day.

"All boats ashore!" the mate cries
stern,
Wi' oaths wad fear a saunt ay:
"Now Gude be wi' ye, Brice, my
bairn"-
"An Gude be wi' ye, Auntie."
What keep-sakes, an' what news are
sent!
What smacks, an' what embraces!
The hurryin' sailors sleely sklent
Droll leuks at lang wry faces,
Fu' pale that day.

While "Yo heave O!" wi' monie a yell
The birkies weigh the anchor;
Ilk mammies pet conceits itsel'
The makin' o' a Banker;
They'll soon, tho', wiss to lieve at
hame,
An' dee no worth a totam,
When brustin' breast, an' whamlin'
wame,
Mak' some wise men o' Gotham
Cry halt! This day.

The Passengers

by James Orr (cont'd)

**It was a long established custom for the seamen, on reaching the banks of Newfoundland, to exact a shilling, or a shilling's worth of liquor, from every passenger; and to shave, without soap, those who refuse to contribute their quota.*

Some frae the stern, wi' thoughts o'
grief
Leuk back, their hearts to Airlan';
Some mettle't bucks, to work ay brief,
At en's o' rapes are harlin';
Some haud aback frae dangers brow
Their toddling' o'er, no cautious;
An' some, wi' monie a twine an' throe,
Do something wad be nauseous
To name, this day.

Meanwhile, below, some count their
beads,
While prudes, auld-light sit cantin';
Some mak' their beds; some haud their
heads,
An' cry wi' spite, a' pantin'! -
"Ye brought us here ye luckless cauf!
("Aye did he; whisht my darling!")
L—d sen' me hame! Wi' poke an' staff,
"I'd beg my bread thro' Airlan',
My lane, that day."

A bonie sight I vow it was,
To see on some lown e'nin',
Th' immense, smooth, smiling' sea o'
glass,
Whare porpoises were stenin';
To see at night the surface fine
That Cynthia made her path on;
An' snove. An' snore thro' waves o'
brine,
That sparkle't like a heath on
A bleaze some day.

But now a gale besets our bark,
Frae gulph to gulph we're tumble't;
Kists, kits, an' fam'lies, i' the dark,

Wi' ae sidejerk are jumble't:
Some stauchrin' thro' a pitch lays laigh -
Some, drouket, ban the breaker;
While surge, on surge, sae skelps her—
Hegh!
Twa three like that will wreck her
A while ere day.

'Tis calm again. While rightin' things,
The heads o' births are bizziet,
The seaman chews his quid, an' sings,
An' peys his frien'd a visit -
"Eh! Dem my eyes! How is't, Goodman?
"Got clear of Davy's locker?
"Lend me a facer till we lan',
"Til blind as Newgate's knocker
We'll swig, that day."

Now Newfoun'lan's becalmin' banks
Our ship supinely lies on;
An' monie a ane his lang line fanks,
Whase heuk some captive dies on:
An now, disguise't, a fore-mast-man
Shaves dry, the churls unwilling'
To pay the poll-tax on deman' -
A pint, or else a shill'
A piece, that day.*

Whan glidin' up the Delaware,
We cam' forenent Newcastle,
Gypes co'ert the wharf to gove, an'
stare,
Hile out, in boats, we bustle:
Creatures wha ne'er had seen a black,
Fu scar't took to their shankies;
Sae, wi' our best rags on our back,
We mixt among the Yankies,
An' skail't, that day.

The Weaver Poets liked to use a particular verse form known as Standard Habbie. You can recognise it because:

- It has six lines
- The first, second, third and fifth lines have four beats or stresses
- The fourth and sixth lines have only two beats or stresses
- The first three lines and the fifth line all have the same rhyme
- The fourth and sixth lines rhyme with each other

Here is an example:

*O man I thought you wouldna been
In sic a dirty action seen;
I tell you, sirrah, I'll minteen
It files your fame
To rob a broken-hearted queen:
Go, fie, for shame!*

And here is an example of a modern poem written in this verse form:

*I have a lovely little pet
Her name oh sure 'tis Violet
She is the best dog you could get
So brave and true
More loyal friend you've never met
Save me to you*

Task

Now try writing your own poem in Standard Habbie. It could be about a pet or a friend or perhaps about an interesting trip or holiday or any other topic.