

## **Robert Burns Poetry Competition 2012**

### **Published Poets**

#### **My Squeeze**

My squeeze is like an orchid  
Original though, one of a kind  
She's like heavy metal  
That clangs upon the mind.

I won't say I love you  
That's a dangerous word  
But I'm okay to say  
You're my best ever bird.

We are already an item  
Let's hope it continues on  
Can this relationship survive  
Once I am gone?

Say see ya. Now we must walk alone  
Send me many emails to read  
Text and I'll come to you my dear  
No matter how many air points I need.

**Lynne Hill**

## **Hamely Faces**

Aa lou the face o'ma ain countrie  
Thir's nane can beat its physiognomie  
Oan han's an' knees aa'd mak' fower mile  
Tae hear ae Torry fishwife rant her speil  
An watch her orra-man's face.

As shairp-nebbed Norseman's aye in place  
Nae less the braidness o' the Pictish race  
Aa lou the saftness o' the Law Scots smile  
An' canty find the Nor-east guile.

There's Hielan' heids an' Boarder heirts,  
Nae lack o' divers fowks aboot thae pairts,  
Aa widnae spear whaur frae, nor whaur tae,  
Gin aa cud yince mair scance at Scotia's forte.

Aye weel, here we are i' Otago's toun,  
Whaur Burns heich-heids the Octagoun,  
An' hamely faces still staun a' roun,  
As like as no, yince i' Edinboro toun.

**Nigel J Jamieson**

### **Love Poem**

Our love was a braw skie

We got caught in the surly blast

And our lives felt each raindrop

As they fell

Our love was a streyent brae

We climbed the rocks and waited at the

Cliffs edge, gazeing down at the morrows

And back at the old laing synes

Our love is ae way street; er we gang

Thegither or a lane we will reach our

Destination and our love will find a hame

**Vanessa Paton-Myers**

## **The Royal Mile**

The weight of the past hangs heavy in the air  
of this great place with its cobbles and cracks,  
impregnable walls and winding lanes  
where ancestors trudged with aching backs;  
oppressed by the wealth, the power, the fear  
that came from the castle atop on the hill,  
and from the cathedral looming large  
and casting malevolent shadows still.

The light flickers, the wind sighs and moans.  
Here a darkened arch, there a winding street.  
Indelible stains and care-worn steps  
hollowed by countless trudging feet.

As you stand in the depths of a shadowy lane  
by a cold vault, or a burial hole,  
the suffering of your ancestors  
shudders up from the depths of your soul.

**Marjorie Orr**

**Dinna Greet, emigrate**

At St Monans in Fife  
where the gossip is rife  
Euphemia falls hard  
for a Catholic Irishman  
sister Kitty runs off  
becomes a Gaiety Girl  
marries Wally Levine,  
then buys a Park Lane hotel  
bitter news for the boat  
building brothers back home  
Bob and the young Andy;  
Local friends give advice  
"dinna greet, emigrate".  
They sail to New Zealand  
reasoning that far-flung  
Dunedin needs strong boats.

Settled in, the brothers built  
a yard at Careys Bay  
near the harbour entrance  
where Chinese prospectors  
in gold rush days strapped  
stone slabs to their bodies  
to line the deep channel.  
If unlucky, they died.  
If lucky they untied  
the slab, swam back before  
their lungs ran out of air.

The Miller brothers built  
tugs, boats for the South Pole  
fitted out Shackleton  
"Dinna greet" wailed the waves  
as homesick Scots sought sleep  
twelve thousand miles away  
yearning life left behind  
seeking fame, escaping  
shame or trying to make  
a hame for bonnie bairns.  
"Dinna greet little sweet  
let's find a mermaid to  
kiss your feet, stroke your hand,  
warm the curves of your heart.

Only Scottish blood fills  
my veins except Grandad  
Duffy from County Clare  
who young Euphemia Miller  
fell for - brother Andy  
(disgusted, adventurous  
or disappointed, I'll  
never know –kids didn't  
talk much with Great Uncles)  
persuaded us to come  
to the sea, wind, waves  
of St Leonards, gave us  
the strange sensation of  
never  
no longer

belonging  
to anywhere ...

At dawn on the Captain  
Cook between deep ocean,  
wide sky I danced mad  
wild innocence twirling,  
whirling Highland fling, big  
ship moving slowly to the  
plaintive sound of bagpipes.

We shifted to Roslyn  
(unlike the chapel with  
stone corn cobs carved before  
America was known.)  
What were those Kiwis like?  
I couldn't get a part  
in the school production  
of *Macbeth* they said my  
accent was so strong no  
one would understand me.  
So with teenage mates I  
lay on white sand beaches,  
drank Lebanese coffee  
ate mutton birds at our  
student flat behind Knox  
Church, Moray Place Library  
my surrogate parent;  
struggled with a howling  
gale on my wedding night,  
sailed to the Kaik, the  
night before our son was  
born, later, in the dark we  
heard the dawn chorus.

The first Englishman I  
met was in Dunedin,  
selling encyclopaedias,  
wearing a suit, the same  
white shirt for three months then  
he left to try Central.

First day at St Leonards  
a boy asked me for a shag  
I went to a new school  
where the train kids teased me  
until I threw a flask  
of hot Scotch broth at them.  
Every day the teacher  
biffed me out to stand bored,  
baffled in the corridor  
(The Stirling High teacher  
laughed at my jokes because  
I got top in maths. Always.)

I am still friends with a  
boy from St Leonards (and a girl) and if I could  
have a boat now I would.

**Joselyn Duffy Morton©**

## Th' Cheap Chieftain

It's bin a while since mah hurdies  
graced an' greased Glesga's dour streets  
th' rain an' th' rain an' th' rain  
dog shite shod an' trod  
Jimmy addicted, duckin' an' divin'  
wee hens shriekin' an' hurlin' abuse.  
When th' rain's tay wet an' th' hurlin's tay heavy  
an' th' Tron hangs lik' a noose aroon yer neck  
duck an' dive yer way intae Val D'Oro  
plonk th' erse on solid Formica  
order yersel' a haggis supper  
and thus sae let the Lord be thankit.  
Sae ah did an' aw  
but th' bard woods greit  
auld Scotlund has skinking ware  
white chipped plate  
cheps an' mingin' stomach  
minced liver, heart an' lungs  
oats an' oats an' oats  
swimmin' suffocatin'  
in a cess ay vinegar an' suet.  
Th' ware swirls aroond mah plate  
always runnin' but ne'er leavin'  
this manky mess  
slithers doon mah beard  
clogs mah hanky an' clots mah arteries  
an' suin leaves mah weel-swallow'd kye  
stretched an' bent like a drum.  
But aye will be a week afore ah eat again  
an' noo aam naturally waterproof  
I can brave Glesga's duckers an' divers  
the wee hens an' th' rain an' th' rain an' th' rain  
fur ah hae experienced an' ah hae survived  
th' cheap chieftain o' the puddin'-race!

**Kelvin Fowler**

*Written in Glaswegian except when referencing 'The Selkirk Grace' and 'Address To a Haggis'.*

*Inspired by 'Val D'Oro', my favourite fish 'n' chip restaurant.*

## **Buachaille Etive Mòr Mountain**

A huge stone adze thrown  
into the air by an ancient giant  
lands in Glencoe.

Embeds through Jacobite  
Uprisings, massacred guests,  
burned villagers, Highland clearings.

Crouches in the black bracken,  
orange tussock, purple heather  
*tartan noir* sharp

unworn as the day it was thrown.

## **Maris O' Rourke**



### What More Could You Wish For?

From where you rest, loose-limbed, at ease  
Oh the sights you've seen, man  
over one-and-a-quarter centuries:  
Farm boys marching off to war  
Students shouting '*Stop the Tour*'  
Women wanting the vote, the right  
to choose, and equal pay;  
Our neurosurgeons we shall *NOT* lose  
Has Hillside *really* had its day?

Do you think we doth protest too much...?  
Or maybe not enough !

Did such a sight warm you then?  
This last Spring, fresh and cold,  
When tents sprang up, in tandem,  
Not on riverbanks, of old,  
But pitched right at your feet,  
Brassy bold.

Maybe you found their cause not in the least suprising  
Just as you supported the original French uprising:  
Off with their heads then; now corporate heads  
have had their day, finally sent a' packing  
*without* their golden severance pay ...

The global crunch impacting our economy  
Forcing us to embrace a simpler, social currency:  
I propose we call it the Burns' *Unit*  
- in your memory!

Made up of simple pleasures you held so dear:  
Like honest friends - with a listening ear;  
a warming dram (or two); some food to share;  
And a red, red, rose for *all* ladies' fair ...

For happiness is shy;  
We thank you for reminding us  
To grab it when 'ere it appears  
and enjoy it wholly, without fuss  
In fleeting moments like New Year's  
When your own fine song, tho' badly sung  
is *still* the lasting sentiment  
on which hope, for all, is hung.

**Beverly Martens**