

ROBERT BURNS (1759-1796), “the Bard of Ayrshire” and the National Poet of Scotland, was born in Alloway, Scotland. A poor farmer's son, he received little formal education and published *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish dialect* in 1786. The success of this volume allowed him to join Edinburgh's literary elite and marry his mistress Jean Armour who bore his legitimate children (he also fathered illegitimate children with various women). He also began to collect and write songs (over 500 in number, many still sung today including “Auld Lang Syne” and “Scots Wae Hae”) which he contributed to *The Scots Musical Museum* and *The Melodies of Scotland*. Burns lost many friends in the 1790s for his support of the French Revolution and political radicalism (prefiguring modern socialism). Always a drinker, he began to drink more heavily and died at the premature age of 37. Burns is often considered merely a “proto-Romantic” because his poetic style in some ways looks back to earlier 18th Century verse; but his iconoclastic vision and immersion in Scottish folk culture and language make him more authentically “romantic” than many others so styled.

Song--Green Grow The Rashes

Chor.--Green grow the *rashes*, O; *rushes [pondweeds]*
 Green grow the rashes, 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.
 Green grow, &c.

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.
 Green grow, &c.

But gie me a *cannie* hour at e'en, *snug*
 My arms about my dearie, O;
 An' war'ly cares, an' war'ly men,
 May a' gae *tapsalteerie*, O! *head over heels*
 Green grow, &c.

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

Auld Nature swears, the lovely dears
 Her noblest work she classes, O:
 Her *prentice han'* she try'd on man, *apprentice hand*
 An' then she made the lasses, O.
 Green grow, &c.

Sweet Afton

Flow gently, sweet Afton! among thy green *braes*, *hills*
 Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise;
 My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
 Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

Thou stockdove whose echo resounds thro' the glen,
 Ye wild whistling blackbirds in yon thorny den,
 Thou green-crested lapwing thy screaming forbear,
 I charge you, disturb not my slumbering Fair.

How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighbouring hills,
 Far mark'd with the courses of clear, winding rills;
 There daily I wander as noon rises high,
 My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.

How pleasant thy banks and green valleys below,
 Where, wild in the woodlands, the primroses blow;
 There oft, as mild Ev'ning weeps over the lea,
 The sweet-scented *birk* shades my Mary and me. *birch*

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it glides,
 And winds by the cot where my Mary resides;
 How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave,
 As, gathering sweet flowerets, she stems thy clear wave.

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
 Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my lays;
 My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
 Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

John Anderson, My Jo

John Anderson, my jo, John,
 When we were first *acquaint*; *acquainted*
 Your locks were like the raven,
 Your *bonie* brow was *brent*; *handsome; steep*
 But now your brow is *beld*, John,
 Your locks are like the snow;
 But blessings on your frosty *pow*, *poll (head)*
 John Anderson, my jo.

John Anderson, my jo, John,
 We clamb the hill thegither;
 And *mony a cantie* day, John, *many a lively*
 We've had wi' ane anither:
 Now we *maun* totter down, John, *must*
 And hand in hand we'll go,
 And sleep *thegither* at the foot, *together*
 John Anderson, my jo.

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, *21 shilling coin*
The Man's the *gowd* for a' that. *gold*

What though on hamely fare we dine,
Wear *hoddin* grey, an' a' that; *homespun*
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, *gallant fellow*
Wha struts, an' stares, an' a' that;
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
He's but a *coof* for a' that: *dolt*
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! *must not fail [to have]*
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their dignities an' a' that;
The *pith* o' sense, an' pride o' worth, *importance*
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. *attain degree*
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.

To A Louse
On Seeing One On A Lady's Bonnet, At Church

Ha! whaur ye gaun, ye crowlin ferlie?
Your impudence protects you sairly;
I canna say but ye strunt rarely,
Owre gauze and lace;
Tho', faith! I fear ye dine but sparely
On sic a place.

Ye ugly, creepin, blastit wonner,
Detested, shunn'd by saunt an' sinner,
How daur ye set your fit upon her-
Sae fine a lady?
Gae somewhere else and seek your dinner
On some poor body.

Swith! in some beggar's haffet squattle;
There ye may creep, and sprawl, and sprattle,
Wi' ither kindred, jumping cattle,
In shoals and nations;

Whaur horn nor bane ne'er daur unsettle
Your thick plantations.
Now haud you there, ye're out o' sight,
Below the fatt'rels, snug and tight;
Na, faith ye yet! ye'll no be right,
Till ye've got on it-
The verra tapmost, tow'rin height
O' Miss' bonnet.

My sooth! right bauld ye set your nose out,
As plump an' grey as ony grosset:
O for some rank, mercurial rozet,
Or fell, red smeddum,
I'd gie you sic a hearty dose o't,
Wad dress your droddum.

I wad na been surpris'd to spy
You on an auld wife's flainen toy;
Or aiblins some bit dubbie boy,
On's wyliecoat;
But Miss' fine Lunardi! fye!
How daur ye do't?

O Jeany, dinna toss your head,
An' set your beauties a' abroad!
Ye little ken what cursed speed
The blastie's makin:
Thae winks an' finger-ends, I dread,
Are notice takin.

O wad some Power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us!
It wad frae mony a blunder free us,
An' foolish notion:
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,
An' ev'n devotion!

To A Mouse, On Turning Her Up In Her Nest With The Plough,
November, 1785

Wee, *sleekit*, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie, *sleek*
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickering *brattle*! *scampering*
I wad be *laith to rin* an' chase thee, *unwilling to run*
Wi' murd'ring *pattle*! *spade*

I'm truly sorry man's dominion,
Has broken nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion,
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whiles, but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou *maun* live! *must*
A *daimen icker* in a *thrave* *odd stalk in a shock of wheat*
'S a sma' request;
I'll get a blessin wi' the *lave*, *rest*
An' never miss't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
 It's *silly wa's* the win's are strewin' *poor walls*
 An' naething, now, to *big* a new *ane*, *build; one*
 O' *foggage* green! *grass left standing after mowing*
 An' bleak December's winds ensuin,
Baith snell an' keen! *Both harsh*

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
 An' weary winter comin fast,
 An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
 Thou thought to dwell--
 Till crash! the cruel *coulter* past *plowblade*
 Out thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' *stibble*, *stubble*
 Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
 Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
 But house or *hald*, *hold (as in household)*
 To *thole* the winter's sleety dribble, *withstand*
 An' *cranreuch cauld!* *frost-covered cold*

But, Mousie, thou art *no thy lane*, *not alone*
 In proving foresight may be vain;
 The best-laid schemes o' mice an' 'men
Gang aft agley, *go often off-course*
 An'*lea'e us nought* but grief an' pain, *And leave us nothing*
 For promis'd joy!

Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' me
 The present only toucheth thee:
 But, Och! I backward cast my *e'e*. *eye*
 On prospects drear!
 An' forward, tho' I canna see,
 I guess an' fear!

Address To The Unco Guid, Or The Rigidly Righteous

My Son, these maxims make a rule,
 An' lump them aye thegither;
 The Rigid Righteous is a fool,
 The Rigid Wise anither:
 The cleanest corn that ere was *dight* *sifted*
 May hae some *pyles o' caff* in; *grains of chaff*
 So ne'er a fellow-creature slight
 For random fits o' *daffin*. *foolishness*

(Solomon.--Eccles. ch. vii. verse 16.)

O ye wha are sae guid yoursel',
 Sae pious and sae holy,
 Ye've nought to do but mark and tell
 Your neibours' *fauts* and folly! *faults*
 Whase life is like a *weel-gaun* mill, *well-operating*
 Supplied wi' store o' water;
 The heaped *happer's* ebbing still, *grain-hopper*
 An' still the *clap* plays clatter. *mill-clapper*

Hear me, ye venerable core,
 As counsel for poor mortals

That frequent pass *douce* Wisdom's door *kind*
 For *glaiokit* Folly's portals: *stupid*
 I, for their thoughtless, careless sakes,
 Would here propone defences--
 Their *donsie* tricks, their black mistakes, *mean*
 Their failings and mischances.

Ye see your state wi' theirs compared,
 And shudder at the niffer;
 But cast a moment's fair regard,
 What maks the mighty differ;
 Discount what scant occasion gave,
 That purity ye pride in;
 And (what's *aft mair* than *a' the lave*), *oft more; all the rest*
 Your better art o' hidin.

Think, when your *castigated* pulse *punishing*
 Gies now and then a wallop!
 What ragings must his veins convulse,
 That still eternal gallop!
 Wi' wind and tide fair i' your tail,
 Right on ye scud your sea-way;
 But in the teeth o' *baith* to sail, *both*
 It maks a *unco lee-way*. *exceptional lee-way (rough sailing)*

See Social Life and Glee sit down,
 All joyous and unthinking,
 Till, quite *transmugrified*, they're grown *transformed*
 Debauchery and Drinking:
 O would they stay to calculate
 Th' eternal consequences;
 Or your more dreaded hell to state,
 Damnation of expenses!

Ye high, exalted, virtuous dames,
 Tied up in godly laces,
 Before ye gie poor Frailty names,
 Suppose a change o' cases;
 A dear-lov'd lad, convenience snug,
 A treach'rous inclination--
 But let me whisper i' your lug,
 Ye're *aiblins* nae temptation. *perhaps*

Then gently scan your brother man,
 Still gentler sister woman;
 Tho' they may gang a *kennin* wrang *a bit*
 To step aside is human:
 One point must still be greatly dark,--
 The moving Why they do it;
 And just as lamely can ye mark,
 How far perhaps they rue it.

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
 Decidedly can try us;
 He knows each chord, its various tone,
 Each spring, its various bias:
 Then at the balance let's be mute,
 We never can adjust it;
 What's done we partly may compute,
 But know not what's resisted.

Address To The Deil

O Prince! O chief of many throned Pow'rs
 That led th' embattl'd Seraphim to war.
 O Thou! whatever title suit thee--
 Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie,
 Wha in yon cavern grim an' sootie,
 Clos'd under hatches,
Spairges about the brunstane *cootie*, *splashes; bucket*
 To scaud poor wretches!
 Hear me, auld *Hangie*, for a wee, *Hangman*
 An' let poor damned bodies be;
 I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,
 Ev'n to a deil,
 To *skelp* an' scaud poor dogs like me, *spank*
 An' hear us squeel!

Great is thy pow'r an' great thy fame;
 Far ken'd an' noted is thy name;
 An' tho' yon *lowin' heuch's* thy hame, *burning; chasm*
 Thou travels far;
 An' faith! thou's neither *lag* nor lame, *slow*
 Nor *blate*, nor scaur. *bashful; scared*

Whiles, ranging like a roarin lion,
 For prey, a' holes and corners tryin;
 Whiles, on the strong-wind'd tempest flyin,
Tirlin the kirks; *stripping*
 Whiles, in the human bosom pryin,
 Unseen thou lurks.

I've heard my rev'rend graunie say,
 In lanely glens ye like to stray;
 Or where auld ruin'd castles grey
 Nod to the moon,
 Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way,
 Wi' *eldritch* croon. *spine-tingling*

When twilight did my graunie summon,
 To say her pray'rs, *douse*, honest woman! *good*
 Aft'yont the dyke she's heard you *bummin*, *humming*
 Wi' eerie drone;
 Or, rustlin, thro' the *boortrees* comin, *elders*
 Wi' heavy groan.

Ae dreary, windy, winter night,
 The stars shot down wi' *sklentin* light, *slanting*
 Wi' you, mysel' I gat a fright,
Ayont the lough; *across the lake*
 Ye, like a *rash-buss*, stood in sight, *rush-bush*
 Wi' wavin' *sough*. *rustle*

The cudgel in my *nieve* did shake, *fist*
 Each brist'ld hair stood like a stake,
 When wi' an *eldritch*, *stoor* "quaick, quaick," *harsh*
 Amang the springs,
 Awa ye squatter'd like a drake,
 On whistlin' wings.

Let warlocks grim, an' wither'd hags,
 Tell how wi' you, on ragweed nags,

They skim the *muirs* an' dizzy crags, *moors*
 Wi' wicked speed;
 And in kirk-yards renew their leagues,
 Owre howkit dead.

Thence countra wives, wi' toil and pain,
 May plunge an' plunge the *kirn* in vain; *churn*
 For oh! the yellow treasure's ta'en
 By witchin' skill;
 An' dawtit, twal-pint *hawkie's* gane *cow*
 As yell's the bill.
 Thence mystic knots mak great abuse
 On young guidmen, fond, keen an' crouse,
 When the best *wark-lume* i' the house, *work-loom (tool)*
 By cantrip wit,
 Is instant made no worth a louse,
 Just at the bit.

When thowes dissolve the snawy hoord,
 An' float the jinglin' icy boord,
 Then water-*kelpies* haunt the foord, *fairies*
 By your direction,
 And 'nighted trav'llers are allur'd
 To their destruction.

And aft your moss-traversin *Spunkies* *mischievous ghosts*
 Decoy the wight that late an' drunk is:
 The *bleezin*, curst, mischievous monkies *hammered drunk*
 Delude his eyes,
 Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
 Ne'er mair to rise.

When masons' mystic word an' grip
 In storms an' tempests raise you up,
 Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,
 Or, strange to tell!
 The youngest brither ye wad whip
 Aff straught to hell.

Lang syne in Eden's bonie yard, *Long since*
 When youthfu' lovers first were pair'd,
 An' all the soul of love they shar'd,
 The raptur'd hour,
 Sweet on the fragrant flow'ry swaird,
 In shady bower;

Then you, ye auld, *snick-drawing* dog! *tricksterish*
 Ye cam to Paradise *incog*, *incognito*
 An' play'd on man a cursed *brogue*, *trick*
 (Black be your fa'!)
 An' gied the infant warld a *shog*, *shake*
 'Maist rui'd a'. *almost ruined all*

D'ye mind that day when in a bizz
 Wi' *reekit* duds, an' *reestit* gizz, *smoky; scorched wig*
 Ye did present your *smoutie* phiz *dirty face*
 'Mang better folk,
 An' *sklented* on the *man of Uzz* *cheated; Job*
 Your spitefu' joke?

An' how ye gat him i' your thrall,

An' brak him out o' house an' hal',
 While scabs and botches did him gall,
 Wi' bitter claw;
 An' *lows'd* his ill-tongu'd wicked scaul', *loosed ; scold*
 Was warst *ava?* *of all*

But a' your doings to rehearse,
 Your wily snares an' *fechtin* fierce, *fighting*
 Sin' that day Michael² did you pierce,
 Down to this time,
 Wad *ding* a *Lallan* tounge, or *Erse*, *defeat; Scots; Gaelic*
 In prose or rhyme.

An' now, auld Cloots, I ken ye're thinkin,
 A certain bardie's rantin, drinkin,
 Some luckless hour will send him linkin
 To your black pit;
 But faith! he'll turn a corner *jinkin*, *dodging*
 An' cheat you yet.

But fare-you-weel, auld Nickie-ben!
 O wad ye tak a thought an' men!
 Ye *aiblins* might--I dinna *ken--* *perhaps; know*
 Stil hae a stake:
 I'm *wae* to think up' yon den, *woeful*
 Ev'n for your sake!

Tam O' Shanter A Tale.

"Of *Brownies and of Bogillies* full is this Buke."
 Gawin Douglas. *brownies and goblins*

When *chapman billies* leave the street, *peddler fellows*
 And *drouthy* neibors, neibors, meet; *thirsty*
 As market days are wearing late,
 And folk begin *to tak the gate*, *hit the road*
 While we sit *bousing at the nappy*, *boozing at the bar*
 An' getting *fou and unco* happy, *drunk and exceptionally*
 We think na on the lang Scots miles,
 The mosses, waters, slaps and stiles,
 That lie between us and our hame,
 Where sits our sulky, sullen dame,
 Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
 Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,
 As he frae Ayr ae night did canter:
 (Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
 For honest men and bonie lasses).

O Tam! had'st thou but been sae wise,
 As taen thy ain wife Kate's advice!
 She tauld thee weel thou was a *skellum*, *rogue*
 A blethering, blustering, drunken *blellum*; *blabbermouth*
 That frae November till October,
 Ae market-day thou was na sober;
 That *ilka melder* wi' the Miller, *every milling [of grain]*
 Thou sat as lang as thou had *siller*; *silver*
 That *ev'ry naig was ca'd* a shoe on *every nag was nailed*
 The Smith and thee gat roarin' *fou* on;

That at the Lord's house, ev'n on Sunday,
 Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday,
 She prophesied that late or soon,
 Thou wad be found, deep drown'd in Doon,
 Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk,
 By Alloway's auld, haunted *kirk*. *church*

Ah, gentle dames! it *gars me greet*, *starts my tears*
 To think how many counsels sweet,
 How many lengthen'd, sage advices,
 The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale: Ae market night,
 Tam had got planted unco right,
 Fast by an *ingle*, bleezing finely, *fireside*
 Wi' *reaming saats*, that drank divinely; *foamy brew*
 And at his elbow, *Souter* Johnie, *shoemaker*
 His ancient, trusty, droughy crony:
 Tam lo'ed him like a very brither;
 They had been fou for weeks thegither.
 The night drave on wi' sangs an' clatter;
 And aye the ale was growing better:
 The Landlady and Tam grew gracious,
 Wi' favours secret, sweet, and precious:
 The Souter tauld his queerest stories;
 The Landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
 The storm without might *rair* and rustle, *roar*
 Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
 E'en drown'd himsel among the nappy.
 As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
 The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure:
 Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
 O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
 You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed;
 Or like the snow falls in the river,
 A moment white--then melts for ever;
 Or like the *Borealis* race,
 That flit ere you can point their place;
 Or like the Rainbow's lovely form
 Evanishing amid the storm.--
 Nae man can tether Time nor Tide,
 The hour approaches Tam maun ride;
 That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
 That dreary hour he mounts his beast in;
 And sic a night he taks the road in,
 As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last;
 The rattling showers rose on the blast;
 The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd;
 Loud, deep, and lang, the thunder bellow'd:
 That night, a child might understand,
 The *deil* had business on his hand. *devil*

Weel-mounted on his grey mare, Meg,
 A better never lifted leg,
 Tam *skelpit* on thro' *dub* and mire, *skipped; puddles*

Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
 Whiles holding fast his gude blue bonnet,
 Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet,
 Whiles glow'rin round wi' prudent cares,
 Lest *bogles* catch him unawares; *spirits*
 Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
 Where ghaists and *houlets* nightly cry. *owls*

By this time he was cross the ford,
 Where in the snaw the chapman *smoor'd*; *suffocated*
 And past the birks and meikle stane, *big stone*
 Where drunken Charlie brak's neck-bane;
 And thro' the *whins*, and by the cairn, *brambles*
 Where hunters fand the murder'd *bairn*; *child*
 And near the thorn, aboon the well,
 Where Mungo's mither hang'd hersel'.
 Before him *Doon* pours all his floods, *The River Doon*
 The doubling storm roars thro' the woods,
 The lightnings flash from pole to pole,
 Near and more near the thunders roll,
 When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
 Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a bleeze,
 Thro' *ilka bore* the beams were glancing, *each opening*
 And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bold *John Barleycorn!* *whiskey*
 What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
 Wi' *tippenny*, we fear nae evil; *two-penny*
 Wi' *usquabae*, we'll face the devil! *whiskey*
 The *swats* sae ream'd in Tammie's *noddle*, *brew; head*
 Fair play, he car'd na deils a *boddle*, *penny*
 But Maggie stood, right *sair* astonish'd, *sore*
 Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,
 She ventur'd forward on the light;
 And, wow! Tam saw an unco sight!
 Warlocks and witches in a dance:
 Nae *cotillon*, *brent* new frae France, *stately dance; brand*
 But hornpipes, jigs, *strathspeys*, and reels, *trad. reels*
 Put life and mettle in their heels.
 A *winnock-bunker* in the east, *window-seat*
 There sat *auld Nick*, in shape o' beast; *the Devil*
 A *towzie tyke*, black, grim, and large, *furry hound*
 To gie them music was his charge:
 He screw'd the pipes and gart them *skirl*, *screech*
 Till roof and rafters a' did *dirl*-- *vibrate*
 Coffins stood round, like open presses,
 That shaw'd the Dead in their last dresses;
 And (by some devilish *cantraip* sleight) *magical*
 Each in its *cauld* hand held a light. *cold*
 By which heroic Tam was able
 To note upon the haly table,
 A murderer's banes, in gibbet-*airns*; *irons*
 Twa *span-lang*, wee, unchristened bairns; *foot-long*
 A thief, new-cutted *frae a rape*, *from a rope*
 Wi' his last gasp his *gabudid* gape; *mouth did*
 Five tomahawks, wi' blude red-rusted:
 Five scimitars, wi' murder crusted;
 A garter which a babe had strangled:
 A knife, a father's throat had mangled.
 Whom his *ain* son of life bereft, *own*
 The grey-hairs yet stack to the heft;

Wi' mair of horrible and awfu',
 Which even to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie *glow'r'd*, amaz'd, and curious, *stared*
 The mirth and fun grew fast and furious;
 The Piper loud and louder blew,
 The dancers quick and quicker flew,
 The reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they *cleekit*, *linked arms*
 Till *ilka carlin* swat and *reekit*, *each wife; burned*
 And *coost* her *duddies* to the *wark*, *cast off; clothes; work*
 And *linkit* at it in her *sark!* *danced; shirt*

Now Tam, O Tam! had they been *queans*, *maids*
 A' plump and strapping in their teens!
 Their sarks, instead o' *creeshie flainen*, *dirty flannel*
 Been snaw-white *seventeen hunder* linen!-- *finely woven*
Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair, *These pants*
 That ance were plush o' guid blue hair,
 I wad hae gien them off my *hurdies*, *backside*
 For *ae blink* o' the *bonie burdies!* *one view; pretty maids*
 But wither'd *beldams*, auld and *droll*, *witches; like goblins*
Rigwoodie hags wad *spean* a foal, *bony; cause to wean*
Louping an' flinging on a *crummock*. *Leaping; wooden club*
 I wonder did na turn thy stomach.

But Tam *kent* what was what fu' brawlie: *saw; well*
 There was ae winsome wench and *waulie* *pretty*
 That night *enlisted in the core*, *among the dancers*
 Lang after *ken'd* on Carrick shore; *known*
 (For mony a beast to dead she shot,
 And perish'd mony a bonie boat,
 And shook baith *meikle* corn and *bear*, *much; barley*
 And kept the country-side in fear);
 Her *cuttie sark*, o' Paisley *harn*, *low-cut shirt; linen*
 That while a lassie she had worn,
 In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
 It was her best, and she was *vauntie*. *vain*
 Ah! little ken'd thy reverend grannie,
 That sark she *coft* for her wee Nannie, *purchased*
 Wi' twa *pund* Scots ('twas a' her riches), *pound*
 Wad ever grac'd a dance of witches!

But here my Muse her wing *maun cour*, *must close*
Sic flights are far beyond her power; *such*
 To sing how Nannie lap and flang,
 (A *souple jade* she was and strang), *supple wench*
 And how Tam stood, like ane bewith'd,
 And thought his very *een* enrich'd: *evening*
 Even Satan glow'r'd, and *fidg'd fu' fain*, *fidgeted full gladly*
 And *hotch'd* and blew wi' might and main: *fidgeted*
 Till first *ae caper*, *syne* anither, *one step; then*
 Tam *tint* his reason a thegither, *lost*
 And roars out, "Weel done, Cutty-sark!"
 And in an instant all was dark:
 And scarcely had he Maggie rallied.
 When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry *fyke*, *fight*
 When plundering herds assail their *byke*; *nest*
 As open *pussie's* mortal foes, *bark; rabbit's*
 When, pop! she starts before their nose;

As eager runs the market-crowd,
When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud;
So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
Wi' mony an *eldritch skreich* and hollow. *hair-raising*

Ah, Tam! Ah, Tam! thou'll get thy fairin!
In hell, they'll roast thee like a *herrin!* *due*
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin! *herring fish*
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!
Now, do thy speedy-utmost, Meg,
And win the *key-stone o' the brig,* *mid-arch of the bridge*
There, at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they dare na cross.
But ere the keystone she could make,
The *fient* a tail she had to shake! *fiend*
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious *ettle;* *desire*
But little wist she Maggie's mettle!
Ae spring brought off her master *hale,* *whole*
But left behind her ain grey tail:
The *carlin claught* her by the rump, *wife clutched*
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk man and mother's son, take heed:
Whene'er to Drink you are inclin'd,
Or Cutty-sarks *rin* in your mind, *run*
Think ye may buy the joys *o'er dear;* *at too great a cost*
Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

Highland Mary

Ye banks, and braes, and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery!
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie:
There Simmer first unfauld her robes,
And there the langest tarry;
For there I took the last Farewell
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloom'd the gay, green birk,
How rich the hawthorn's blossom,
As underneath their fragrant shade,
I clasp'd her to my bosom!
The golden Hours on angel wings,
Flew o'er me and my Dearie;
For dear to me, as light and life,
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' mony a vow, and lock'd embrace,
Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursels asunder;
But oh! fell Death's untimely frost,
That nipt my Flower sae early!
Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay
That wraps my Highland Mary!

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips,

I aft hae kiss'd sae fondly!
And clos'd for aye, the sparkling glance
That dwalt on me sae kindly!
And mouldering now in silent dust,
That heart that lo'ed me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary.

John Barleycorn

There was three kings into the east,
Three kings both great and high,
And they hae sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn should die.

They took a plough and plough'd him down,
Put clods upon his head,
And they hae sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn was dead.

But the cheerful Spring came kindly on,
And show'rs began to fall;
John Barleycorn got up again,
And sore surpris'd them all.

The sultry suns of Summer came,
And he grew thick and strong;
His head weel arm'd wi' pointed spears,
That no one should him wrong.

The sober Autumn enter'd mild,
When he grew wan and pale;
His bending joints and drooping head
Show'd he began to fail.

His colour sicken'd more and more,
He faded into age;
And then his enemies began
To show their deadly rage.

They've taen a weapon, long and sharp,
And cut him by the knee;
Then tied him fast upon a cart,
Like a rogue for forgerie.

They laid him down upon his back,
And cudgell'd him full sore;
They hung him up before the storm,
And turned him o'er and o'er.

They filled up a darksome pit
With water to the brim;
They heaved in John Barleycorn,
There let him sink or swim.

They laid him out upon the floor,
To work him farther woe;
And still, as signs of life appear'd,
They toss'd him to and fro.

They wasted, o'er a scorching flame,
The marrow of his bones;
But a miller us'd him worst of all,
For he crush'd him between two stones.

And they hae taen his very heart's blood,
And drank it round and round;
And still the more and more they drank,
Their joy did more abound.

John Barleycorn was a hero bold,
Of noble enterprise;
For if you do but taste his blood,
'Twill make your courage rise.

'Twill make a man forget his woe;
'Twill heighten all his joy;
'Twill make the widow's heart to sing,
Tho' the tear were in her eye.

Then let us toast John Barleycorn,
Each man a glass in hand;
And may his great posterity
Ne'er fail in old Scotland!

Such a Parcel of Rogues in a Nation

Fareweel to a' our Scottish fame,
Fareweel our ancient glory;
Fareweel ev'n to the Scottish name,
Sae fam'd in martial story.
Now Sark rins over Solway sands,
An' Tweed rins to the ocean,
To mark where England's province stands-
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!

What force or guile could not subdue,
Thro' many warlike ages,
Is wrought now by a coward few,
For hireling traitor's wages.
The English stell we could disdain,
Secure in valour's station;
But English gold has been our bane-
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!

O would, or I had seen the day
That Treason thus could sell us,
My auld grey head had lien in clay,
Wi' Bruce and loyal Wallace!
But pith and power, till my last hour,
I'll mak this declaration;
We're bought and sold for English gold-
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!

Robert Bruce's March to Bannockburn

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,
Welcome to your gory bed,

Or to Victorie!

Now's the day, and now's the hour;
See the front o' battle lour;
See approach proud Edward's power-
Chains and Slaverie!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a Slave?
Let him turn and flee!

Wha, for Scotland's King and Law,
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Free-man stand, or Free-man fa',
Let him on wi' me!

By Oppression's woes and pains!
By your Sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free!

Lay the proud Usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!-
Let us Do or Die!

Study Questions:

1. Compare the style and diction of "Green Grow the Rashes" and "Sweet Afton."
2. What do poems like "To a Louse" and "To a Mouse" say about Burns' attitude about humankind's relation to the natural world?
3. What do poems like "Address to the Unco Guid" and "Address to the Deil" suggest about Burns' attitude toward religious orthodoxy/Scottish Presbyterianism?
4. Burns has been labeled a "pre-romantic" for his rationalistic treatment of folk material. Does "Tam O' Shanter" support or deny such a statement?
5. From the selection of poems and songs, how would you summarize Burns' political attitude toward his native Scotland, particularly as a satellite of the British Empire during a time of revolutionary upheaval in France?
6. From the selection of poems and songs, how would you summarize Burns' attitude toward drinking and the pleasures of the flesh?
7. How does Burns' use of Scots' dialect vary in the selection of poems and songs? Why did Burns choose to write in dialect?