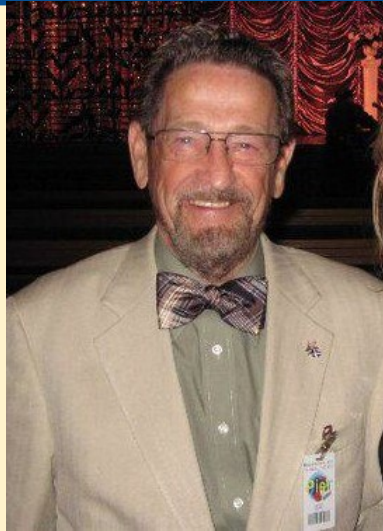




The Tattler



**THE 2024
JACK HUME
HEATHER & THISTLE
POETRY COMPETITION
SUPPLEMENT**

On the following pages are the entries in the 2024 Jack Hume, Heather and Thistle Poetry Competition.

Thank you to everyone who put on the Robert Burns Society of Annapolis. You can enjoy reading all three of their poet's hats to create new works of art for the 9th Annual Jack Hume Poetry Competition. We received ten entries, for 2024, and the very worthy winner was Ronnie O'Byrne from Halton Peel Burns Club. Mark Ferguson, newly installed RBANA President had the honour of presenting the Jack Hume Trophy to Ronnie at the Gala Dinner on May 4th in Mt Holly NJ. (right)

Ronnie's poem entitled "*The Classic and Us*" takes excerpts from a variety of well known literary and historical events and compares these to a simpler more down to earth perspective. This clever and inspiring poem has great depth and those attending the Conference had the opportunity to hear Ronnie recite it in person at the Burns Dinner.

The second placed entry was taken by Paul Kennedy Jr from the South Jersey Celtic Society with his poem entitled "*Uisce Bae*".

Third place was awarded to "*A Bonnie Lad*" by Patricia (Pat) Moffitt of



efforts.

Our thanks also go to the three members of the judging panel, Steve Newman, South Jersey Celtic Society, Jim McLaughlin, Calgary Burns Club and Jim Alexander, Burns Club of Atlanta. Looking forward to next year which will be the Decennial anniversary of the Jack Hume Poetry Competition, we can anticipate another strong field. Why not put pen to paper or fingers to keyboard and create your own masterpiece!

Mark Ferguson
Hume Competition Coordinator

1st Place

The Classics and Us

We didn't wander as a cloud
On high o'er vales and hills,
Or stand at once to see a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils.

*We guddled trout up stany burns
An' climbed ower tips an' bings,
Played leevo till the lights came oan
An' scissors at the swings.*

We didn't stand on burning decks
Whence all around had fled,
Or rise to go to Innisfree
To build a cabin shed.

*We built oor gang hut up the wids,
Had logs an' stumps for stools,
Smoked woodbine fags or number six
An' sometimes plugged the school.*

We didn't charge for half a league
In valleys full of death,
Or meet a traveller from a land
Who'd seen two trunkless legs.

*We swam in quarries, built a fire
An' played best-man-fa's-deid,
Oor mithers saved up green shield stamps
An' fried us up plain breed.*

We liked the sound of Xanadu
And even Kubla Khan,
And planned to see the pleasure-dome
Where sacred rivers ran.

*But first we had to walk three mile
An' sneak intae the flicks,
The entry money that we'd goat
Was yaised tae buy some chips.*

We didn't lose a winnings heap
When playing pitch and toss,
We didn't have to start again
Or speak about our loss.

*The men we knew played 'heids or tails'
In sheds doon by the pit,
They'd chase us aff or kick oor arse,
An' coughed up blackened spit.*

We didn't know of Lake Lebarge
Or men who moiled for gold,
Or Artic trails with secret tales
That would make our blood run cold.

*Our scary stuff was 'truth or dare'
At midnight doon the Kirk,
Huddled up by some auld grave
Whare ghaists an' spirits kick.*

We didn't know the buds of May
Or how the rough winds shake,
Or that the way to beauty's heart
Was like a summer's day.

*We went tae discos in Church ha's
An' sipped oan Buckfast wine,
Some winched the lassies in the dark
While ithers sat in lines.*

We never seen clods washed away
Or heard the toll of bells,
Or 'If' our sixty-seconds run
Would save us from ourselves.

*An' as the years hae rolled along
An' minutes tick unwanted,
We lift oor heids tae dae our best
An' plunder oan undaunted,
An' noo we stan' an' reminisce
As we've become advisors
On how the life we had as kids
Has made us a' the wiser!*

© Ronnie O'Byrne, Halton Peel & Niagara
Burns Club, June 2024



2nd Place

Uisce Bae

I know a thing, that makes hearts sing
And revel all the day;
A wondrous gift that makes souls lift:
They call it Uisce bae.

In the hush of twilight's gleam,
Where hearts find solace, it would seem,
We gather 'round, our spirits high,
To toast the joys that never die.
With glasses raised, we share the strife,
And savor every drop of life,
For in each sip, come long gone days,
Beneath the spell of uisce bae.

From friendships formed in laughter's wake,
To tales of old that time won't break,
We find a refuge, warm and true,
Where worries fade like morning dew.
With memories etched in golden hues,
We sing the songs our hearts refuse
To let fade into the misty gray,
As we embrace the uisce bae.

Through stories spun, with mirth and cheer,
The bonds grow stronger, year by year.
The fire's glow, the whiskey's heat,
Ignite the flame of memories sweet.
With every glass, we honor days,
That shine like sunsets' golden rays,
For in this alchemy we sway
Deep immersed in uisce bae.

Though years may steal our youthful prime,
And line our faces, mark the time,
The tales we tell, the songs we sing,
Bring back the joy that age can't bring.
So let us raise our voices high,
And toast to days that never die,
In cherished moments, let us stay,
United by the uisce bae!

Through the laughter and the tears,
The passing of the fleeting years,
We'll hold these memories, dear and true,
Like drops of rain on morning dew.
With every revel, our spirits soar,
As we unlock that hidden door,
Where stories flow, and hearts portray,
The magic that is uisce bae.

© Paul Kennedy Jr, South Jersey Celtic Society, June 2024



A Bonnie Lad

(A Tribute to Robert Burns)

The good Almighty saw a need
In Janwar bleak and drear
To brighten up the lives and hearts
Of those who lived in Ayr.

And so a lad...a bonnie lad...
Was born with talent rare
To light the darkness of the rooms
Whenever he was there.

He wrote and spoke of many things
With honesty and flair.
The little mouse, the lowly louse,
He poetized with care.

He turned the head o' many a lass,
He was so braw and fair,
Wha could resist his rhyme and sang
That lilted in the air?

He saw the worth of common men
Without the rank, and mair,
He mourned the lack of common sense
That kept men in a square.

And now two hundred years have passed,
We feel we must declare,
That still he brightens many a heart
With his fine rhyme or aire.

So let us thank Almighty God
For giving us a share
Of such a bright and bonnie lad
That trod the banks of Ayr.

© *Patricia Moffitt, Robert Burns Society of
Annapolis, June 2024*



Other Entries

December

December seems a somber month,
At least from nature's view:
The trees are bare; the flowers gone;
The birds that stay are few.
The stars that twinkle up above
Quite shiver in the cold.
The moon is just a sliver now,
An arc of burnished gold.
December's days are short and grey.
They're bleak, and cold, and drear.
It is only Winter's magic
That promises some cheer.
December watches Winter
As she dances through the night;
So lovely and dramatic,
She swirls and twirls in white.
Dressed in a gown of snowy lace,
She glides across the pond.
She transforms each drab blade and twig,
Waving her icy wand.
All nature shimmers at her touch,
She's done her magic now:
A lovely, frosty, wonderland.
Ah, Winter, take a bow!

*© Patricia Moffitt, Robert Burns Society of
Annapolis, June 2024*

Other Entries

Nae Scotland, Nae Party

(An Ode to Scotland's Euro'24 Qualification)

Whit did the' pundits aw' say?
"Who Scotland", no way!"
"It'll be Spain and Norway"
But, they got it aw' wrong
Aye, we're aff tae the party
Oan a wing, a prayer, and a song!

Tae the famed 'Hampden Roar'
Each time we did score
Oor bloody lion did bore
As aw' took their cue!
Scotia's pride did restore
Hail the' braw lads in blue!

Meikle mair we could say
'Bout McGinn, McGregor, McTominay
An' the' stars o' the party
Wha made us sae proud
Baith at home an' away,
How we aw' sang sae loud!

Lang syne, a feat sae rare
Yet, wi' game an' mair tae spare
But whit dae we care
We're in through the front door
Wi' nae mair tae despair,
Ae new dream tae explore!

Tae Germany, wi' Europe's elite
Nae fears wha next we may meet
Aye, oor dream is sae sweet
In charge we hae Clark
O' a team near complete
Aye, they'll share mak their mark!

Sae let us then pray
When we're in Germany
That we play boss Clark's way
Pit mony scores on the door
An' pit Scotia's past tae lay
Here's tae Euro'24
C'mon Scotland, let's party!

© *William Hardie, San Francisco Caledonian Club June 2024*



Other Entries

A Tale O' John Barleycorn

In Ayrshire's fields, oor bard wid walk,
Penning a story tae aid in talk,
Yin was surely the best when born,
The tale of oor John Barleycorn.

The shimmering taps o' barley shine,
Matured and ready tho' nay for wine,
Scythed and sheaved in the autumn sun,
Whaur bairnies climb in fervent fun.

I observe the Golden mounds around,
And through the fields, carts rumbling sound,
The treasure moves to the staging farm,
Safely stored, dry, and well out of harm.

Hauled near the still in an auld Scot's toon,
Then malted slow tae the next full moon,
Smoked wae the peat fur flavour taste,
Also in the watter, naething is waste.

Distilled thruple times tae mak' it smooth,
And casked tae lie, the burn tae soothe,
Wae years gone by, the dust removed,
A sleekit taste, wae a smile approved.

But we daurnae let it lie too lang,
'cause in a beat it could aw gang wrang,
The years o' waitin' may be awfu sair,
As the angels tak' an unfair share!

But Jug's noo filled, the Inn's are stocked,
The couthy lads are armed and cocked,
Filling their kytes like a babe unborn,
They say hello, John Barleycorn.

I'll end the story aboot this tale,
Wae John Barleycorn and golden ale,
Oor bard's example o' Tam I warn,
I repeat again, John Barleycorn,
I repeat again, John Barleycorn!!

© *Henry Cairney, Calgary Burns Club, June 2024*

Other Entries

The Snaw

Ahm really fed up wae the snaw,
An' wish it wid jist gang awa'
Three feet in the morn',
Ahm broken an' torn,
Ma mind says it is the last straw!

It snaw's fae October tae May,
An' jist about ev'ry day,
Ye see a big dump,
Ahm noo an auld grump,
Wife says really!, "Ye don't say!".

Snaw shovels are a' the new rage,
But shairly its no at this age,
Ah push an' ah heave,
But ah should jist leave,
An' pay some yin young at this stage!

Ah've had it wae a' the hard Snaw,
Ma Front door is noo a white wa',
The neebors look ower,
And say "Whit a shower",
An' posture wi' envy and awe!

The summer is jist roond the bend,
Wae time fur ma sair back tae mend,
Ahm crooked and bent,
Some say I ahm spent,
The hospital I will attend.

It's April and rain it is seen,
Ah can even see a bit green,
A river noo flows,
Each day as it grows,
Providing a rapturous scene!

The summer is a' about done,
Each day we are losing the sun,
Ah hum an' ah haw,
The curtains ah draw,
An' greet at the oncoming fun!

© *Henry Cairney, Calgary Burns Club, June 2024*



Other Entries

To My Glass

Oh sweet libation heaven-sent,
With you great countless nights I've spent,
And quickly from my senses rent
 Though angels ne'er are wrong;
Yet easy to your will I'm bent
 Held gently by your song.

Behold your glorious amber hue!
More sweet than misty morning dew,
And on my lips I'll liken you
 To a heavenly embrace.
A life to me you give anew
 And a smile upon my face.

But all too soon your threads will go,
And empty, you will leave me low,
In longing for your golden glow
 To cry, "whyt do you leave?"
Your answer which I do not know
 So in loneliness I grieve.

Oh, curséd be the heav'ns divine,
For draining my glass, His cruel design,
This empty vessel, my needs confine
 Dear God, I loathe this plight!
That lays me low in steep decline
 And wears away my might!

I curse your will, your cosmic glee,
To leave me dying, whiskey-free,
So to you I beg, on bended knee
 Have mercy on my soul!
My heart, it weeps in sorrow's sea
 This loss, a cruel toll!

But wait, what is this thing I spy?
A tall green bottle, so close nearby,
Contents untouched, and looking shy
 Such that would tame a beast!
A sight so dear, t'would make me cry
 And all my woes released!

A smile alights upon my face,
As I reach out, a sweet embrace,
To fill my glass, a saving grace
 And joy won't be denied.
And whiskey, as it should replace
 The emptiness inside.

Oh, fickle heart, such quick despair,
In moments lost, a fleeting snare,
But see! The whiskey's steadfast care,
 A hint of life's abundance.
An empty glass tis not aware
 Of the bottle's quiet redundance!

© *Paul Kennedy Jr, South Jersey Celtic Society, June 2024*



Other Entries

Like Father Like Son

Aftimes said ma mither,
“Yir jist like yir faither”.
Weel, that couldna’ be,
Ma faither’s no’ me!

His hair wis sae black,
An’ his een dark broon.
Ma hair’s mair fair,
An’ my een licht blue.

He wis richt haun’ed,
An’ ah’m corie-dukit.
He’d take a guid tan,
But ah’m pale an’ wan.

He focht in the war,
Ah ne’er went that far.
He enjoyed a guid puff,
Ah ne’er touched sic’ stuff.

He worked in a factory,
Ah went tae the Uni.
Ne’er heard him swear,
But ah did, an mair.

Be that as it may,
He tocht me life’s way.
Helpin’ haun’, sage advice,
An’ willin’ sacrifice.

But, it’s true whit they say,
It jist happened wan day.
In the mirror ah saw,
Ma dear faither an’ aw’.

But, ah’m no’ complainin’,
Fir ah’m now realisin’.
In ma son, ah see me,
It’s whit’s meant tae be!

© *William Hardie, San Francisco Caledonian Club June 2024*



Other Entries

This was written one Saturday morning when I was watching the Ireland v Scotland rugby match - and in the middle of the game – there was

A Saturday Knock at the Door

Good morning, dear sir, it's a marvellous day, and thank you for saying hello,
We're here on behalf of the Church of Our Christ to share prayers an' the love of our Lord.

Noo, ma brain has kicked intae, "don't freekin' swear", an' did ah hit pause or record?
But this should be fun for a minute or two, so ah slowly creak open the door.

Their pamphlet has letters of gold near the top, but their fingers are hiding the words.
But the picture is clear, there's a guy wi' a beard, in white robes, holdin' fishes an' loaves.

They both close their eyes tae look at the ground, as a neebor walks by wae his dug,
An' something starts gnawin' an' nigglin' inside as ah try tae read upside doon wurd.

A'm flashed back tae times when ah learned about guilt, an' ah think o' they Sundays in
church,
Listenin' tae sermons by creepy auld priests, who served us the flesh an' the blood.

I get that these folk think religion is true, wae their pilgrim skirts - hair tied in buns,
But somehow their piety pisses me off wae their bible school graces an' hymns.

Before ah could say Santa Claus or the Pope, an' fairies or God gi'e me strength,
A big book was flicked up tae page ninety-four an' some scriptures were read line by line.

The Bible says this, an' Messiah says that an' Genesis says near the end,
That Jacob or Isaac had better call Saul, an' on Sunday we'll a' take a rest.

Just then there's a roar - fuck!, Scotland has scored, an' noo am strainin' tae hear,
They're tellin' me something that Exodus did an' how Moses set fire tae his beard.

Then slowly the words start tae form in my heid as the wife turns doon the TV.
Is she listening tae this? - or watching the game? – then ah blurt out “ah just don't believe!”



*A Saturday Knock at the
Door (continued)*

What happened to you? - did something go wrong? - can we help you get back on the path?
Jesus needs you and loves you, and prays for your soul, just let him come into your heart.

An' then it begins, the cut an' the thrust, of scripture an' well-practiced lines,
An atheist thought is a demon unchained; they must save me from hell's burning flames.

From the six days ae work, we joist an' debate about Darwin an' Adam an' Eve,
Tae the stars an' the universe, how it began, then tae cancer, an' prayers, an' tae death.

We travel through time an' we prod an' we probe, an' we batter each other's opinion,
Ah ask about Calvin, the Muslims an' Jews, the Catholics an' twisted religions.

Ah didn't accept that their God was alive, an' tae me! - omnipresent sounds weird,
Believing in things that just don't exist, an' how living wae God should be feared.

I tried tae explain that science is real, an' maybe am nearer agnostic,
But that didn't matter, we MUST all hae faith, without it, we fail an' we falter.

By now ah wis cauld, an' could hear through the wall, that the game had been a disaster,
The Irish had run in some second half tries ...where was Thor when ah needed the bastard?

Some listening tae this will think it's obscene, that their God should be cursed or abused,
That someone should call out religion this way or make fun o' their good Christian views.

But ah dinnie feel restricted frae saying, cause a'll no' be burnin' in hell,
You're the wan that believes in it awe, he'll be keepin' that warm for yersell!

© *Ronnie O'Byrne, Halton Peel & Niagara Burns Club, June 2024*