PLUMES OF TIME
By
LEWIS SPENCE

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A new volume of verse in English and Scots by a writer prominently identified with the new Scottish Literary Movement. The English poems are the result of an endeavour to adhere to the spirit of pure poetry, whilst some of those in Scots display technical affinities with the work of the "auld makaris"
PLUMES OF TIME

by

LEWIS SPENCE

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TO THE

LADY MARGARET SACKVILLE

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The Plumes of Time

Now that golden bird the sun
Hides him in the branching tree
Of foliaged cloud, and fitfully
His feathers, falling one by one,
Sparkle on the moorland dun
Like planets on a wintry sea.

Night the fairy peacock flies
Athwart the gardens of the air,
The shadow-roof of Paradise
Is scattered with his plumage rare.
O golden day, O azure night,
Which is the bird of more delight?
The Rose

(A Roundel)

In the North, in the war of the winds and the sigh of the sea,
In the season of storms and the desolate colour of snows,
We remember her fragrance, though gone from the garden is she,

The rose.

When the Argo of Spring from her Cyprian harbourage goes
Past wastes of the winter, an ark of the bird and the bee,
Her fragrance is first in the heart, she is swifter than those;

As rapture remembers its tryst in a season to be,
As the swallow for ever returns to the nest that she knows,
So returns as the hope to the hour, as the bird to the tree,

The rose!
The Carse

IT is a thousand sunsets since I lay
In many-birded Gowrie, and did know
Its shadow for my soul, that passionate Tay
Out of my heart did flow.

The immortal hour the hate of time defies.
Men of my loins a million years away
Shall have the gloom of Gowrie in their eyes,
And in their blood the Tay.
The Phoenix

So the five hundred years came round again with a May moon,
And the bennu, the bird that finds new feathers in the fire,
The bird that the Greeks call phoenix, flew to the oases.
Time has ties and tethers for everything late or soon,
She draweth the chains in her hands and the doomed to her pyre,
And as cinders and shadows of cinders men remember their faces.

And the phoenix sought her a tree for her eyrie of flame,
Minding the sycamore of her last apotheosis,
But boles and branches were gone and a garden was growing,
A garden of which the phoenix knew not even the name,
Where lilies seemed ashen beside the burning of roses,
And the hyacinth leaped as only its bloom hath knowing.

And the phoenix cried: “I shall perish in blossoms burning,
In curling flames of the hyacinth, over these embers that seem like roses;
ah, better in beauty to perish,
To find new life through the fire of the rose returning than through the anguish my desolate spirit remembers;
Sweet resurrection shall spring through the flowers I cherish.”
Then sought the phœnix a holocaust under the roses,
Bathing her golden plumes in the flowers' conflagration
Till the hour when the torches blossomed in Egypt's cities.
She cried: "Not in flowers the spirit of fire reposes;
I shall fly through night to the flame of my new creation;
When all is spoken pain is the swiftest of pities."

Not from the ashes of beauty is man's resurrection,
Out of the pain of that fierce and miraculous wonder
The fire of the spirit aflame with a noble endeavour,
Searing the sorrow and sin out of man's recollection.
He that re-shapeth his spirit in flame and in thunder—
He shall stand up with the gods and the godlike for ever.
Rest Harrow

Out of the cells and streets, to be
The breather of the turnpike hours,
The lord of lane, the thane of tree,
Gathering the village days like flowers.

To come at last to one calm place
Whose dials measure time by sleep,
A plunge of gardens dim with grace
Of sycamore shadows valley-deep.

Some hamlet-hollow which can hold
The gloaming like a tierce of wine,
Red rose of some white river’s fold,
Smouldering where elfin waters twine.

There far from tides of thought and speech
To rest remote from time and toil,
The tenant of the thatching beech,
The franklin of a dreaming soil.
The Pheasant

Now the enchanted Phasian bird
Thunder in the woods has heard
That no noise except the lute
Or breeze of the Pamphylean flute
Insults within his native groves,
For he was born to lutes and loves.
His rainbow, to the peasant’s eye,
Is holy flame in Arcady,
Where his golden shadow blesses
The loves of swains and shepherdesses,
And paints the woodland such a way
That planets seem to burn by day.
O, stay the swift and impious flame,
Nor bring the dream to mortal shame;
Your levins loose on hawk and owl;
Seek Pallas’, not Apollo’s fowl—
A legendary bird more bright
Than Phoenix in her nest of light.
Thanes of the Northland, spare, O spare,
This seraph from the Asian air!
Inspiration

The heart, that Venice of the blood,
    A city waiting on a song,
   Out of the body's solitude
Hears murmurs all day long
Of pains and tumults, yet awaits
Lutes and enchantments at her gates.

Nor hearkens to the desert words
From those barbarian spaces cast,
Awaiting the Illyrian chords
That she shall hear at last.
Silence is no immortal dust—
As rains must fall, so musics must!
York

In the organ’s shadowy grove
The thrushes of celestial love,
Feathered out of music’s pains,
Know no winters and no rains.
Their sunrise is the fiery glass
Where saints stand in eternal Mass,
Their evenings are the winging shades
Sweeping the Minster’s holy glades,
Their spring is the mysterious grace
Which blossoms in the temple-place.
They for an autumn season have
Unfoliaged trees in a dark nave
Of Druid pillars, hushed and sere
As oaks in an expiring year.
Vesper and matin-song they choir
With an angelic-sylvan fire
Which many-birded Fontainebleau,
The merle’s green chapel, never knew,
Nor Broceliande, that silver roof
Of nightingales, can match in proof
Of that seraphic eminence
Which of flesh disrobes the sense,
Bewitching body into air,
And raising the rapt blood to share,
As a wave in music’s ocean,
Tempest’s height and tide’s emotion.
In York’s grey forest I have heard
Higher rapture than the bird
Brings to the Arcadian hour,
A golden woodland of such power
That I have felt a Second Earth
Might rise from such harmonious mirth,
That I have felt a Second Ark
Shall hold the singing-birds of York
Autumnal

I

HAVE loved autumn as an amethyst
Set into cunning silver, and her mist
Dimming the golden trees to goblin treasure,
The exquisite slow measure
Of leaf-fall in her visionary rains,
Her brooks, those passionate veins
That rush like rapture in a poet’s blood,
I have loved and understood.

What though the sheep upon the distant hills
The first white footfalls of the winter seem?
He lives, who feels this last irradiate gleam,
A thousand summers, and its magic stills
Winter for ever in his heart. I hear
The phœnix-fabled burning of the year,
And summer’s soul, a rainbow-feathered ghost,
Soar to that secret coast
Where the unnumbered seasons have their sphere.
The Doves of St. Giles

AROUND St. Paul’s the pigeons fly
Like azure shadows from the sky,
And people throw them crumbs of food,
And joy in their blue multitude.

But when I pass St. Giles’s crown,
And northern psalms, like doves, come down,
I know celestial reasons why
Martyrs for such bright birds could die.

There is a keen, high rapture there,
Stark, and most excellently bare,
A lustre of the naked walls
Such as I never saw in Paul’s.
The Finch

The finch’s word
In a ferny place,
   The speech of a bird
In the twilight’s grace
Laced the wood
   And lit the moss
With a gleam of good
   And a laugh at loss.
And I stood upright
   And sought his feather
Where day and night
   Made gold together,
And saw him shine
   With twinkling plume
Like the flash of wine
   In an evening room,
Like an elfin thought
   In the plunge of night,
Like an opal brought
   Into deep moonlight,
From the heart of the finch
   God’s rapture ran—
Joy in an inch
   Song in a span!
The Vagrant's Song

HERE shall I lie in sedge
By the deep brook's edge,
Cupping the osiered waters to a draught,
While the chaste lily's raft
Drifts into faery the fleet afternoon;
Lie till the goblin moon,
The silversmith of day,
Beats his bright overlay
On parcelled holt and veiny rivulet,
And so forget
Through hours that only elfin dials shade,
Then wake upon the glade
To see the dawn's low fires upon the dew,
To drink deep day anew,
To know though like the leaves all summers fade,
That one rich day can make all summers true.
**Pieces of Eight**

I have treasured the stars as pirates save
Pieces of eight in an island cave,
I have buried many sunsets there
To make me gold and scarlet wear.

And one day I shall walk the town
A rich man in a blood-red gown,
Scattering planets in largesse
To buy men bread of happiness.
In May

MAY mornings blossom now to greet
The sun's white sandals in the street;
From causeway-crown to window-sills
His footsteps fall like daffodils.

And privet hedges, spruce and quaint,
Behind their bars of emerald paint
Seem things of wildwood prisoned there,
Crouching their cages in despair.

Pale hyacinths from the hollow lands
Of Zuyder raise their waxen hands,
As though some buried beauty strave
To beckon lovers to her grave.

The maiden trees are talking silk,
Cherries of pink, the thorn of milk,
Like girls who, in a careless noon,
Plot and conspire new robes for June.

And russet-velvet linnets spin
Through sun-pools with a golden din,
Singing of seeds and hidden foods
To feather-out their summer broods.

In all this tapestry of things,
Light and the leaf, desires and wings,
There lies a deeper joy than all
The painted hours of festival.
Moor Songs

I

HAVE walked moorlands, and I know
Shepherd and song are not apart;
From soil to soul the sagas flow,
The herd is poet in the heart.

And I have found that songs can cling
Like mosses to the shieling's stone,
That hearts of wilderness can sing
The musics that the winds have sown.

Here in the waste I wisdom find,
The secret joy, misunderstood,
That Beauty has a distant mind,
That music is a solitude.
**The Calton Hill, Edinburgh**

**A**

THENS is deathless; on this height  
She sleeps as the sun sleeps at night,  
Embalmed in shadow, as the rose  
In winter's pyramid-repose,  
Awaiting the Palladian spells  
That shall relume her citadels.  
O call not this the grave of Greece,  
But the pavilion of her peace,  
The pillow of her hour's release!

Athens in sleep is nobler far  
Than waking cities of the dawn:  
This mountain is her metaphor,  
The mirror of her Parthenon.  
The living air which wraps it is  
A wind from the Acropolis.  
A valiant and victorious breath  
Which might awake the lungs of death  
Her bridal bed encompasseth.
The Silken Heart

From gardens in the death of tapestries
Can men pluck lilies, or divide the rose
From its sewn stem; from fair embroideries
Eat where the apple's silken likeness grows?
So, if the heart be but a painted thing,
As pictures have no power of offering,
There may the soul take nothing for its longing;
'Tis but a paradise upon a hanging,
But one web thicker than a dream, a stuff
Brave to the eye, for love not half enough.
The Heedless Generation

APOCALYPSE! The sun goes down,
Heart's blood upon the sword of frost;
I hear the Castle trumpets blown
As though the world were lost.
The ashes of the snow are driven
As if they fell from fires in heaven.

Yet men walk high and men walk low
Upon Dunedin's seven mounds,
And so, I reckon, shall they go
When the last trumpet sounds.
Not even judgment from the sky
Could shatter such an apathy.
Phantom May

Now is the snowflake, winter’s butterfly,
Making a ghostly springtime in the air;
The hawthorn’s silver wraith is in the sky.

And such illuminate webs the gardens wear
As when in May the orchards’ blossoms lie,
And summer snows assemble from the pear.
Bride or Handmaiden?

BEAUTY ever was designed
To thrill the heart and not the mind,
To speak to the immediate blood,
But never to the pensive mood.

And when I hear one say that thought
Has been to him by Beauty brought
I know that Beauty in his house
Has dwelt as servant, not as spouse.
Rainbow at Carberry

I WAS abroad on Pinkie lea
    When rich enchantment fell on me
Out of the rainbow, and the earth
    Changed colours with the sea.

The braes were witched to gulfy waves,
    The trees were masts in galleon-graves,
The battlefield a scarlet mere,
    Little lakes the sunset laves.

And Carberry, like Behemoth,
    Flung to the clouds a flowery froth
Of gardened thorn and lilac spray,
    In glorious springtime wrath.

And Forth assumed long landward shades
    Of grove and grain and grassy glades,
And fallow, like the haunted plain
    That into Pentland fades.

And which was land, and which was sea
    Was all a sorcery to me—
I could not tell the weed from wave,
    The river from the lea.
The Angel

TRIUMPH comes on secret wings
To the victorious Sons of Light
Like a phantom in the night.
In nocturnal whisperings
Are born the conquerors and kings,
And sleep has made more slaves than Pharaoh's might.

Night herself is but a slave,
An Ethiopian watcher on the sun;
Wilt thou pay to such an one
Half the tribute of the grave?
Meridian battles by the brave
In midnight vigils are already won.
Dunedin

SHE lies, this city of the air,
Betwixt my hope and my despair,
As the Nymphidian turrets lay,
Close, yet a million leagues away.

Her wynds’ enchanted caverns hold
Legend’s invisible, fine gold,
An hour sends greater glamour here
Than Troy in twice a thousand year.

I have sought beauty, yet I know
This goddess from her eyes of snow
Can flash a more mysterious beam
Than stars that sow the seas of dream.

O touch no more the harp to make
Music alone for music’s sake
The while this Naples of the sky
Awaits new rhyme and rhapsody!
Borderland

THINK of Death as an Arcadian plain
Between the breasts of time, where great trees hold
More birds than all the forests of the world,
Oaks rooted deep in supernatural earth,
Leaved with mad music, poplars filled with merles,
Sheep like the first snows on November swards,
Bees murmuring like the gathering of a breeze,
Zephyrs too idle to awake the curls
On shepherdesses' cheeks—a natural place,
Neither too dim, nor too unseizable
For fingers of mere flesh, nor yet too near
Those painted winds that cherubs dwell among,
An April valley on the path to Heaven,
Where one might live a hundred years or so,
And cleanse the spirit from the dust of life,
Then, with a purer mind, turn cityward.
The Moon Croft

The moon is my croft; its ghostly rye
And the milking soft from its fairy kye
Keep my blood unearthly well
With wine and food of miracle.

My nine meadows are night’s nine hours,
Their trees are shadows, their grasses flowers.
My sheep are the snows whose fleeces fair
Old Winter blows through endless air.

My cabin is built of the moonbeams’ ice
Cut from midnight’s precipice;
With magic spade my glebe who delves
He has the aid of all the elves;
Full is his stack, sure is his boon,
He cannot lack whose croft is the moon!
I WILL away to the Kyles
And the rain-shadowed isles,
Mosses of the sea;
And on far elfin strands
And wide wind-wandered sands
I shall be free.

And in vast evenings straying
Shall watch the flood's delaying
On the amber beach;
One with the winds and waves,
Rapt in the quiet that saves
All thought—all speech.
SONNETS
WHOM winds of sorrow have delayed from shore
Let him take heart; all oceans draw to sands,
The farthest deserts have their Samarkands,
And no Atlantic is an evermore.
Nine years among the isles Ulysses bore
Ship-shattered yet unvanquished; on his hands
The helmsman’s mark deep-dented, the commands
Of gods still deeper on his heart, yet wore
No less of man his forehead. All those waves,
Hazards and sour enchantments, siren eyes,
Nor moan nor murmur from his soul did draw,
And he did toil, a slave to evil’s slaves,
And pass through foul, misshapen tyrannies,
Yet still he came at last to Ithaca!
The Tapestry

In tapestries deep-shadowed from the day
Gleams Famagusta; through the assembled trees
The silken waters sparkle; the long seas
Are spun with tinsel ships, yet far away
Through the rich webs I feel my spirit stray
To Mediterranean and the Cyprian breeze
Where flames that fire which dimly sleeps in these
Dead broiderries that sense and heart betray.

Yet she who spun this vision from her soul,
Some legend-woman in an elfin mood,
Did nobly by her dreams. Great is the eye
That leaps horizons and the season's shoal,
But greater, hands that in some solitude
Give dreams and visions immortality.
The Inward Rose

SHADOW'S invasion and the warlike wind,
These shall not make me mindless of the rose
Or that Byzantine song of hers that blows
Past Cyprus till its uttermost whisper find
This Caledonia. Brightness seeks her kind
Even o'er the snow-like foam or foam-like snows,
Yet not to find her grail my spirit goes;
Enough that she has left her grace behind.

That which, unseen, is with us, is unseen
Because within us; unforgotten things
Become our heart's shape as the cup shapes wine,
And not in any garden Damascene
Such scarlet of the soul of summer sings
As sings her Cytherean thought in mine.
Naples at Dalmeny

SILENCE and myriad sweetness where the sea
Floos round the pedestals of stately woods.
The honey of June winds in nimble moods
Blows mildly down this league of liberty,
The air’s great temple pillared by the tree,
As when Rome’s sandals woke the solitudes.
Now on its ancient hold once more intrudes
Passionate, sublime, the spirit of Italy.

As some fantastical and tropic bird
Blown hence by winds, there falls upon the bay
The rapture of a Neapolitan hour.
This is a sister to the breeze that stirred
The streets of Herculaneum yesterday
And kissed the rose in some Vesuvian bower.
On the Most Noble Name
Canteloupe

(Presently usurped by a melon.)

O CANTELOUPE! That such a name as thine,
Thou bugle among names, should be abased
To that which whets the Vandal’s morning taste
Who filched Yquem and Beaujolais for wine,
Barsac and Frontignac. That he may dine
Lapped in exalted syllables, he lays waste
A paradise of sound. He has defaced
The world’s rare musics with the lusts of swine.

O echo of a white Tiberian town,
Hung with dead banners and a dream’s renown,
Dauntless Italian, eloquent as a sword,
May this from the barbarian, noble word,
Ransom and disenchant thee. Names of power
Are relics, not the baubles of an hour.
Portrait of James III, Holyrood

Time moves so stately into Holyrood
Each day, that I have thought him some dead king
Seeking his house in love’s imagining,
Haunting the towers where once his virtue stood;
But all Time’s glory in its amplitude
Makes not for one dead Caesar; he can bring
Less than an antique picture’s offering
Where love illuminates the limner’s mood.

O King, whose kingdom was not Albany
But Avalon, in thy pale face I see
The lines great Beauty’s adamant engraves,
So that herself is sculptured in her slaves,
Lie here, O fragrant heart; this painted urn
Shall wrap the rose that bled at Sauchieburn.
LIKE a triumphant and thrice-glorious death
This agony of music! He who dies
To conquering trumpets feels no sacrifice,
And saints on fiery beds for less of faith
Than breathe these sounds we perish underneath
Have lain enraptured. In this hour we rise
Through a melodious pain to victories,
Finding in anguish an immortal breath.

But with a partial woe this majesty
Descends upon us, and not hopelessly,
For that we know this speech, and shall again
Speak it at last for ever, flaws our pain.
We weep, we sigh, we suffer at those feasts
As fallen angels—not as risen beasts.
POEMS IN SCOTS
Sonnet in Auld Scots

O HERT that is a garth of roses deid
How shall thy courage greet anither spring?
Thine is nae bourtree where the birds may sing,
Abune thy sands the lily cannot speed.
Ah youth, be zealous in thy first manheid
Thou keepis in thy hands delivering
Of thine awin spirit, give not onything;
The future’s flowers are in the present’s seed.
Whose consolation is in blossoms past
Shall ken the dule o’ desarts at the last.
Syne, desolations drift upon his saul
As haar upon the waters maks its fall.
Sair wandered, in a muming shall he walk;
Wha plucks the flower maun bide the barren stalk.
Spring Cam' Yestreen

SPRING cam' yestreen,
She sang in the yaird,
Gerss was fain o' her een,
And the haill land heard.
Her sang was sma'
Like a bairnie's lilt,
Wi' the far awa'
And the weird intil't.
I kent her carp
O' the elfin strain
On the viol sharp
O' the April rain.
She sang "Away
Are the dowie days;
O warld be gay,
O birds give praise,
O luve awake,
O burgeon break,
O earth grow green for simmer's sake."
Great Tay of the Waves

O
THAT yon river micht nae mair
Rin through the channels o’ my sleep;
My bluid has felt its tides owre sair,
Its waves hae drooned my dreams owre deep.

O why should Tay be a’ my day
And Buddon links be a’ my nicht,
The warld o’ a’ my waiks be gray
Wi’ yon far sands’ unwarldly licht?

As haars the windless water find
The unguarded instant falls a prey
To sakeless shadows o’ the mind,
And a’ my life rins back to Tay.

Deep in the saul the early scene—
Ah, let him play wi’ suns wha can,
The cradle’s pented on the een,
The native airt resolves the man!
The Prows o' Reekie

O WAD this braw hie-heapit toun
Sail aff like an enchanted ship,
Drift owre the warld's seas up and doun
And kiss wi' Venice lip to lip,
Or anchor into Naples Bay
A misty island far astray,
Or set her rock to Athens' wa',
Pillar to pillar, stane to stane,
The cruikit spell o' her backbane,
Yon shadow-mile o' spire and vane,
Wad ding them a'! Wad ding them a'!
Cadiz wad tine the admiralty
O' yonder emerod fair sea,
Gibraltar frown for frown exchange
Wi' Nigel's Crags at elbuck-range,
The rose-red banks o' Lisbon make
Mair room in Tagus for her sake.

A hoose is but a puppet-box
To keep life's images frae knocks,
But mannikins scrieve oot their sauls
Upon its craw-steps and its walls;
Wha'̄r hae they writ them mair sublime
Than on yon gable-ends o' time?
Portrait of Mary Stuart, Holyrood

(Sonnet in Auld Scots.)

WAUKEN be nicht, and bydand on some boon,
Glaumour of saul, or spirituall grace,
I haf seen sancts and angells in the face,
And like a fere of seraphy the moon;
But in nae mirk nor sun-apparelled noon,
Nor pleasaunce of the planets in their place,
Of luve devine haf seen sae pure a trace
As in yon shadow of the Scottis croun.

Die not, O rose, dispitefull of hir mouth,
Nor be ye lillies waeful at hir snaw;
This dim devyce is but hir painted sake,
The mirour of ane star of vivand youth;
That not hir velvets nor hir balas braw
Can oueradorn, or luve mair luvely make.
The Gray Etin

A
dawin, frae Corstorphine lea
I saw a ferlie ill tae dree,
The dragon-beast Auld Reekie streitch
Her hale lee-length and rax and reach
To drink her mornin’ frae the sea.
She loupt; her skail o’ sclates gleamed siller,
Then hirpled doun, the auld man-killer,
To sook the blae bree brimmed wi’ faem
That ilka forenicht owre her kaim
She blaws in mist like amethyst,
That belchin’ haar frae oot her wame
That fills fu’ mony a coffin-kist.
As I on rigg cowered couthy there
Amazed, yon hills o’ my despair
Heaved, and the veinings on her flanks
Were streets, her warts were kirks and banks,
Her teeth were pillars, and her een
The Castel winnocks flashin’ sheen.
Then, like the Memnon o’ the Nile,
Whilk gloamin’ livens for a while,
Sank back to stane, and men, like louses,
Swarmed frae her tenements and hooses.
I thocht: “Aye, ye hae wale o’ sauls;
Sae has a kebbuck; can the brawls
That mak’ a day upon your hurdies
Be ither than an hour o’ Tophet?
Ye’ve wale o’ weevils and o’ wordies,
But when did maggots need a prophet?”
The Queen's Bath-house,
Holyrood

TIME that has dinged doun castels and hie toures,
    And cast great crouns like tinsel in the fire,
    That halds his hand for palace nor for byre,
Stands sweir at this, the oe of Venus' bournes.
Not Time himself can dwall withouten floures,
Though aiks maun fa' the rose sail bide entire;
So sail this diamant of a queen's desire
Outflourish all the stanes that Time devours.

Mony a strength his turret-head sail tine
Ere this sail fa' whare a queen lay in wine,
Whose lamp was her ain lily flesh and star.
The walls of luve the mairst triumphant are
Gif luve were waesome habiting that place;
Luve has mairst years that has a murning face.
Capernaum

(St. Matthew xi. 23)

If a' the bluid shed at thy Tron,
   Embro', Embro';
If a' the bluid shed at thy Tron
 Were sped into a river,
It wad ca' the mills o' Bonnington,
   Embro', Embro',
It wad ca' the mills o' Bonnington
 For ever and for ever.

If a’ the tears that thou has grat,
   Embro’, Embro’,
If a’ the tears that thou has grat
 Were shed into the sea,
Whaur wad ye find an Ararat,
   Embro’, Embro’,
Whaur wad ye find an Ararat,
 Forae that fell flude to flee?

If a’ the psalms sung in thy kirks,
   Embro’, Embro’,
If a’ the psalms sung in thy kirks
 Were gaithered in a wind,
It wad shog the taps o’ Roslin birks,
   Embro’, Embro’,
It wad shog the taps o’ Roslin birks
 Till time was oot o’ mind.
If a’ the broken herts o’ thee,
    Embro’, Embro’,
If a’ the broken herts o’ thee
    Were heapit in a howe,
There wad be neither land nor sea,
    Embro’, Embro’,
There wad be neither land nor sea,
    But yon red brae—and thou!
The Embers o' Embro'

I saw the kaim o' Embro' theekit
Wi' gash airs on an after day,
Wi' lightnin'-wabs the lift was streekit,
Plotcock had cam' oot to play,
And doon the Castel dung like strae.
He skelpt the spires wi' horny loof,
And sunnert steeples wi' his hoof.
Sanct Geill's was sand, Sanct Cuthbert's dust
Sanct George's goud a hantle rust,
And Princes Gait a Giant's Causey
O' heapit howffs wi' cables tawsie.
The pillars o' the Calton Hill
Tummelt like caunles ower a sill,
Doon nicht's black thrapple loupt the sun,
And sae Auld Reekie's race was run.

But 'mid the collieshangie stood
Time's turrets, auld gray Halyrude,
For luve had laid its stanes owre well
To gar it shog wi' dunts o' Hell.
I saw it hing, a gouden star,
Hie in the last day's waefu' nicht;
Though Scotland sand o' shadow be
Its lowe shall gar new warlds afar
Marvel what makes sae brave a licht
Burning in sic a majestie!
Sing Walaway nae Mair

Sing walaway nae mair, nae mair,
    The winter moons sae fast are speeding,
The licht is langer in the air,
    And sune the braes will ken new cleeding.

Yestreen abune the sakeless thorn
    I saw the haar like blossom hinging.
The Simmer’s spirit, still unborn,
    The merle that is to be, was singing.

The runkeld grass was caunled owre
    Wi’ ghaists o’ gowans that are sleeping
Fast in the seed that spans the flower,
    Deep in the mools o’ Janwar’s keeping.

Though floods should fresh and winds should wake
    And snaws should hald the sap frae springing,
The mind can its ain seasons make,
    And walk in Simmer and in singing.
Whaur May the Win’ Dwall?

Whaur may the win’ dwall
That gars the lums o’ Reekie rattle?
Comes it in frae Portingall,
Or owre the braid Atlantic?
A reel’s in’t, the Deil’s in’t,
A jig o’ auld Satanas oh!
But when it ca’s the lums doon
It’s by wi’ the romantic!

I ken its skelp upon my cheek,
Its jockteleg upon my thrapple,
It fills wi’ blasphemy the meek,
Wi’ girns the Adam’s apple;
A dag on’t, a drag on’t,
The fairies built Dunedin oh,
The Deil he tries to blaw it doon,
And wow! but he’s succeedin’ oh!
Craigtinny

The fute fa's kind at Craigtinny,
Saft is the gerss as emerald silk,
The air is sweet as April milk
Or reamin' o' the heather hinny.

But the cauld whisper o' the sea,
That haunted aince this marish place,
 Tells o' the corpse-licht's eldritch race
On Craigtinny lea.

And shipmen, smoor'd in tempests green,
Lay stark and droon'd alang the bog,
The deid-claith o' the dismal fog
Shrouding their cauld, wat een.

Snell is the wind upon the lea,
A grue frae aff a dreid despair,
The nicht brings dule, and bitter sair
The gurly whisper o' the sea.
Far Awa’, Fair Awa’

YON gouden road that gangs the glen
  Far awa’, fair awa’,
Whaur it ends the carlins ken,
  Far an’ yont and fair awa’.

Yon siller burn that rins the rigg,
  Far awa’, fair awa’,
On ocean sand at last maun ligg,
  Far an’ yont and fair awa’.

An’ whatna airt will front this face,
  Far awa’, fair awa’?
Yon airt ayont the tides o’ space,
  Far an’ yont and fair awa’.

An’ whatna gait will this hert gang,
  Far awa’, fair awa’?
Whaur rigg and burn are dream and sang,
  Far an’ yont and fair awa’.
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