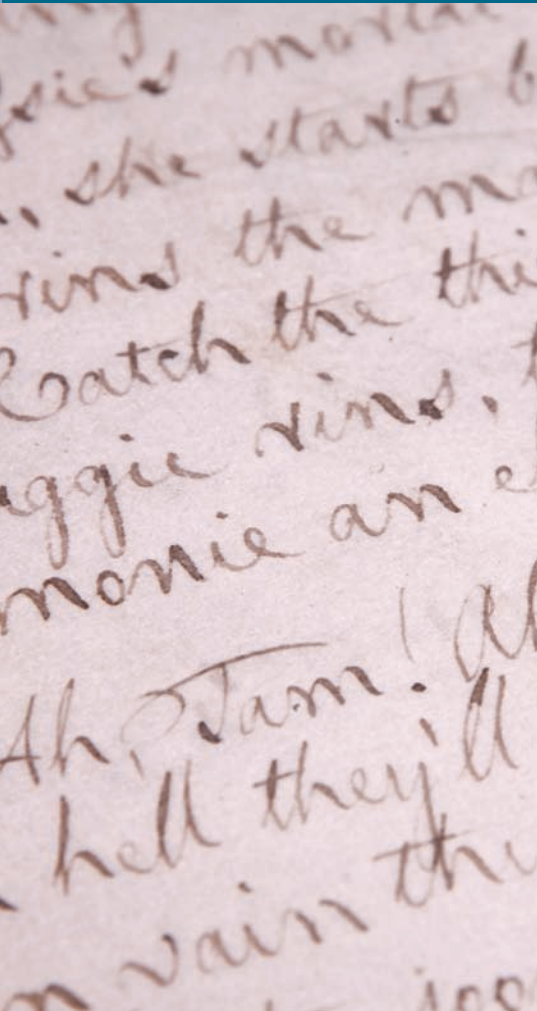


A dram o'banter

Robert Burns is the national mascot for this 'Year of Homecoming'. But what would the great man have thought of being the centre of so much attention? Michael Glen tuned in to his spirit...



When taverns stert tae stowe wi folk,
An warkers thraw aff labour's yoke,
As simmer days are waxin lang,
An couthie chiels brak intae sang;
Among them aw are sonsie faces,
Brent-new income frae furrin places,
Ilk ane, sae blithely, takin turns
Tae heist a toast tae Robert Burns.

This truth fand honest Rab dumfounert,
An aiblins juist a bittock scunnert,
At sic a stushie noo he'd perished,
E'en though his warks were unco cherished.
He thocht o Jean, his loosome wife,
Left lane tae thole the waefu strife
O takin tent o hoose an hame,
An greetin bairns wi empie wame.

Bit then he gauped, though nane could see,
Fur his was immortalitie.
The nation's bard was happ't in awe,
An on his mou the wirds: *It's braw
Tae be a leegen here on Earth,
Wi folk frae aw aroon its girth
Hame-comin fur a salutation
Tae Scotia's makar's reputation.*

Bit pleasures are lik petals, brittle,
Wi man an aft-times scattert skittle,
Ane instant 'mang his billies prood,
The next a slap whaur he has stood.
Oor Rab kent weel that tae be vauntie,
Tae strunt about, be ower jauntie,
Wad dwang guid men tae ding him doon,
An breenge him frae Edina toon.

Bit tae oor tale. Rab's here as guest,
Tae handsel this by-ornar fest –
Twa hunnert years an fifty's passed
Syne he blew in on Janwar's blast.
Nae parlyment sat doon that day
Tae legislate that, come whit may,
Oor rantin, rovin Robin's date
Wad gar the world tae celebrate.

The verra thing diverts him maist
Is gangin oot in furm o ghaist.
Tae tell the thrang amidst the nappy,
It's Rab the bogle keps them happy.
Frae howf tae howf, an ilk ale hoose,
His speerit rins, a swippert moose,
Jinkin and joukin shauchlin feet,
Doon the wynds, along the street.

Frae moose tae houlet he chynges guise,
An flees about the gloamin skies.
He gies a skraich, unhaily, dauntin,
That minds admirers he's still hauntin.
Bit this is jest, tae be contrair –
He finds the adulation sair.
He whuspers in a lug: *It's Rab.
Drink on, and he'll pick up the tab!*

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This poem is based on Burns' well-known humorous work *Tam o'Shanter*

aiblins – perhaps
breenge – drive out
by-ornar – extraordinary
chiels – lads
houlet – owl
loosome --lovable
nappy – strong drink
swippert – nimble
wame – stomach