THE EDINIAD

The most beautiful town in the world
Benjamin Disraeli

I doubt I'll ever tire of exploring Edinburgh, on foot or in print
Ian Rankin
MEALL AN FHEADAIIN

Folk musicians from other villages, other regions, pass’d through Coigach frequently. Some came searching for the roots of older songs & airs, some eagerly bringing new ones; all were welcome

Jack Maloney

The feather-flux of life is strange in change
Blown zephyr-lite on random, breezy gusts
Or are they more than sheer coincidence
For on the birthday of the lass I loved
The first of hers I’d miss’d in seven years
My friend & I arrived at Altan Dhu
That treeless heap of heather, sheep & shore
With views to navigate the weary soul
Down wee mad roads to better harbours found
Where, squatting on the spot where last I felt Communion with my lost, consumptive bride;
I slipp’d a spot of silver perspective
Into my ain life’s ale, with rapid gusts
Some Scotia-foaming sloka I must make!

WAVERLY

Nunc insanus amor duri me Martis in armis
Tela inter media atque adversos detinet hostes

Virgil

Round Whittinghame I took another walk & at the Lodge with Glenda softly talk
Of how our love was never meant to be & so I set foot forth for Waverly
A man of honour bound to board a train
But wondering how stations gain their name
I wander’d to that lovely little church & thro’ Lord Balfour’s books I sang in search
Where with delight I found prosaic lays
That once the world as one did wonder-praise!
Through this the modern novel was design’d,
A book nigh now forgotten by mankind & pocketing an eighteen forty-one,
Back thro the flocks for Haddington was gone!
EAST BANK

I felt at home five minutes after my arrival in Edinburgh
Charles de Gaulle

I found myself alive off Easter Road
A warm, spring sun lighting this little room
My long muse-lust has left me to afford

Dust particles danced from the shadow-gloom
& roused me into Reekie’s sweeping streets
Some orphan up an open New Town flume

As in me love of sonnetry repeats
I find a spot three hundred steps away
That like a catalyst my life completes

For, now, out in the bright spark of the day
Between these tombs of Binnie, Baird & Burck
I roam East Bank where serendips may play

& know this is a place where I could work
For silent spaces are the makar’s kirk

THE FAMOUS FIVE

I’d never been to Ayrshire
I hitch’d down one Saturday
Sixty miles to Kilmarnock
Just to see Hibernian play
The Proclaimers

Half way astride the Hibee’s history
The finest line of Scottish forwards forms
With passes & shots of pure poetry
They broke upon the foe like summer storms

Mastering the halcyon two-three-five
Oor Bobby, Lawrie, Eddie, Will & Gord
Have on the Alban annals hard arriv’d -
Quintet of chevaliers with searing sword

By Valhalla these lads were lifted up,
To energize three title winning teams
& rattled the first European cup
Gut-wrenching in the semis to Stade Rheims

Once, sixty thousand prais’d them from the banks
Whose new North Stand renamed in paean thanks
LOCHEND PARK

But Isna embro a glorious city?
Sae clear the air, yonner you see
A man & a woman stammin on the top o Arthur’s seat

While Arthur’s seat towers impressive
Close by its feet three water bodies wait
Til the weather turns once more aggressive
Frost Giants marching from their Arctic plate
Reclaiming all these lochs they lost of late.

Til then Lochend in lazy lollipop lies
Geese, mallards, gulls & pigeons vie for crumbs
Beside the mute swans & the mild magpies
As hippies on the grass beat djembe drums
& picnicking couples suck juicy plums

View in these rocks the ravages of time
& tectonic seabeds innum’rable
Before mankind’s capacity to rhyme
Could capture time’s passage in a bubble

James Hogg

MEADOWBANK THISTLE

Edinburgh isn’t so much a city, more a way of life

The League’s Third Lanark humbl’d by the banks
Their sacred place made vacant suddenly
Fresh Edinburghers voted to the ranks
Ferranti advertising cars for free –
Thus Leaguemen insist on a change of name –
When Meadowbank grew further in its fame!

Their colours, scarf-by-scarf, seep thro the schools
That in rare hearts have barely left a trace
Tho, once they were just one point from the pools
Missing the top flight by a single place

Then, in a cloud of mystery & means
Bill Hunter moved the club to Livingstone
That modern town, Edina’s Milton Keynes
That modern club, ‘Wimbledon-Caledon’

Ian Rankin
SAINT TRIDUANA’S CHAPEL

The stronghold of the Picts, namely, Edinburgh, which owing to its conquest by Edwin, had its name sometimes made into Edwinesburg

John Rhys

Hark back to the raids of the Pictish Kings
Omnipotent in all their heart’s desires
When Nechtan observes Triduana’s rings
& wishes them loosen’d by lavish fires
Alas! The lass to Restalrig retires
Removes her eyes, them to her master sends –
In those sad orbs his lust forever ends.

As Attic temples grew where lightning burn’d
Saint Marg’rets soar’d about this sacred site
Where James the Third in penance oft return’d
& saw, verg’d upon their eternal night,
Divers pilgrims, swept in optical plight,
Hoping a saint could cure their flailing eyes
Thus chapel rose, sumptuous, to the skies

CRAIGENTINNY CASTLE

Cauld whisper o the sea
That haunted aince this marish place
Tells o’ the corpse-licht eldritch race
On Craigentinnie lea

Lewis Spence

Twas on a night in nineteen forty-two
A birthday bash was held for boys & girls
A castle full of costumes, cakes & curls
None knowing Goering’s Luftwaffe near flew
That with a blast their innocence out-blew
As flying glass amang the panic hurls
& smoke & flame in dire commingling swirls -
How many dreams of cherubim there slew?

The aftermath saw bodies on the grass
But for that angel in her em’rald dress
Only her singe-stich’d hem was ever found

& now, if ye a night should ever pass
Beneath this roof, then ye shall know duress
For still she lingers, singing satan-sound.
POLICE BOX

A setting for an opera nobody performs nowadays an opera called Scottish history

Alasdair Gray

I, t’wards a sea-blue Time-Lord’s tardis drew,
Where Craigentinny Road & Avenue
Conjunct, as if gridiron Brooklyn blocks,
& there found a famous old Police Box
One of those still scatter’d thro Embro’s streets
Reliques of when oor Bobbies beat their beats
Before walkie-talkies reported crime,
So, let us transport our minds, for a time
Into that room thro all the rules of rhyme.

Blue light atop the box revolves a flash,
To which the nearest Bobby boots a dash
& finds himself sent to an incident
With first-aid kit & notebook sprinting went
To find a bleeding lassie fleeced of cash.

MEADOWS YARD

Everything is lovely & unreal, beautiful with a kind of accidental beauty more natural to Scotland than the intended beauty of artistic nations

Flora Grierson

The city dweller needs quiet spaces
As country crows startl’d by rows of shops
& so I found a thriving oasis
A place where a poet pauses, then stops
& reflects on his ain situation,
As I did in this modern forest glade
Winning back the ‘Meadow of the Nation’
That once was into railway sidings made
As if John Muir had saved Yesenemi
From landfill, nature’s Aids-like enemy

Upon our backs we track the dragonfly
& with its orange tip the tortoise shell
Gyres waltzing in the woodland air as well,
& poets trance as under wings we lie.
HARRY LAUDER

It is a wonderful thing, a signal honour; to be honoured in your own city. I say Edinburgh is my city – it became my city when Portobello annexed it

Harry Lauder

A smile is worth at least ten thousand frowns
Like sun-glimpse on a misty Porty morn
The weather thus little Lauder born,
Funniest in this sunniest of towns
For this is where all Embro likes to play
& comics practice jokes upon the prom -
His own explode like the Hydrogen bomb
Holds English-speaking peoples in his sway
Receptions better than a Cup Final
First man to sell a million vinyl
“Oor King o jest & sang!” proud Scotsmen say.

All thro the war, to counter Hitler’s rage,
This greatest entertainer of his age
Rais’d spirits from the front-lines of a stage!

PORTOBELLO

Everyone is going today to Edinburgh for the Caledonian Rout. All week there will be races, amusements, balls, etc. All the nobility will be there. I look forward to some gossip

Frederick Chopin

When in Porty, think of Admiral Vernon
& his young midshipman, George Hamilton
To Panama them both did boldly go
& seized, by sea, pretty Puerto Bello
Where George, unscath’d, laden with Spanish gold
Determin’d on an Eden to grow old
Would find it off the desolate Figgate
By Giudan’s sea, lovely serene or spate
There built a house, & as good towns are bred
Around his hearth a primrose village spread
Soon blossoming thro once empty expanse
Where folk would bathe ‘fore strolling to the dance,

His house long gone, but when the Town Hall pass’d
Praise Hamilton, the town’s iconoclast!
THE DALRIADA

Edinburgh’s a great place— there’s so much magic in the streets

Astride the city limits, penn’d by wave & Lothian’s God-Country rolling East
A palace stands which Linus would play proud

“Come in! Come in, you’re all very welcome
To the three o clock session, bring a drum
Guitar, pipes or violins, sing a song

You would think they’d been doing this for years
Or at least since the Home Guard had moved in
Singing shanties as they saved the railings:

But no! Mere years ago a man & wife
With music in their blood bought up the place & brought together local troubadours
With an increasingly ambient audience…

…I n all my days I’ve never felt so free.

PORTOBELLO PARK

Edinburgh is the perfect place for a civilised existence

There was this Weegie at a car boot sale
Floggin’ his stuff at rock-bottom prices & bartering thirty clubs for three quid
I starts marching thro toun, putter & wedge Zigzaggin’ Bruntsfield links nigh every day
Where shot-by-shot I found the Tiger Zone, After all, Embro’s still golf’s sacred hame,
On Musselburgh’s nine holes I upp’d my game When, one day, Portobello, on my own, & I don’t think I even paid to play,
But even so, stood on the tee-side edge I yelp’d with glee! A real-life hole-in-one!
But no-one at the course or the houses Witness’d my claim to golfing’s holy grail!

Laura Fiorentini
There is no city in Europe more spectacular than Edinburgh;
it is absolutely operatic

Henry James

ARThUR’S SEAT

MILTON ROAD

City of Edinburgh, broken necklace in the sun
You are caves of guilt, you are pinnacles of jubilation

Norman Macaig

Duddingston Crescent
First Minister flashes by
Rampant Lion flags
Mother broods ahead, couchant
Gorse suntan haunches
Like a leaf ting’d with Autumn
Climbing from the world
Another Mount Mynaaka
& I, Hanumaan
Yet far from the Ramayana,
Blue motion blurs by
The Edinburgh Megabus
Pelts down this wide length
& misses many beauties
DUDDINGSTON HOUSE

It is quite lovely, bits of it

*Oscar Wilde*

Entering sequester’d nook
Bring a bottle & a book

Past the golfers on the green
City villa stood serene

Grecian art & elegance
Useful English affluence

Once the Earl of Abercorn’s
Summer seasons here were borne

Dukes, Countesses, Adm’rals, Earls
Festoons, pastries, claret, pearls

Now, an architecture firm
Runs its empire term-by-term

Walls dripping in naked art
Setting owners quite apart!

1745

Shall Scotland croun her ain again,
This ancient capital –
Or sell the thing for scrap

*Sydney Goodsir Smith*

With Cope at Tranent
Charlie march’d on Duddingston
The young Chevalier

Jacobite debate
“Are we sure ze men will stand!”
The Prince shrewdly asks

“How dare ye!” cry chiefs,
“Imply any otherwise
We bravest of brave!

“My sword I have drawn,”
Charlie’s ain histrionics,
“And scabbard disown’d,

To lead the charge in person!”
& therein are battles won!
HALF HANGIT MAGGIE

Each is indubitably & absolutely Edinburgh.
Each is proudly & consciously different from the rest.

Moray Maclaren

Their Maggie was dead
Hung thro crass infanticide
Grassmarket behind
They carried hame her coffin

Thirsty from the weight
At the Sheep’s Heid Inn they pause
Whiskey, powsodie
& a quick game of skittles

Coffin creaks open
Hand, forearm, shoulder – “MAGGIE!”
“My god…” “I’M ALIVE!”
All Musselburgh elated

So she had to be set free,
Ancyent double jeopardy!

DUDDINGSTON LOCH

We got an audience of 6.3 million that stayed up to watch the curling final. Now there are only five million people in Scotland, so clearly they weren’t all Scots

Robert Kelly

By an aeon kirk
& its ain tranquil garden
Atop a rubbish dump
Doctor Neill moulded nature
Into a poet’s picture

Below, loch side large,
Thomson’s ‘Playfair’ towers tall
Perfect for twitching;
Greylag geese, wee partridges
& the ghosts of brromstick wars

This pane, when frozen
Still Curling’s first capital
Proud, icy fountain
Of Canada’s sacred game!
DUNSAPIE FORT

Overlooking a pastoral hollow as wild & solitary as any in the heart of the highland mountains: there, instead of the roaring of the torrents, we listened to the noises of the city

Dorothy Wordsworth

Votadini realm
Twyx Traprain & Dun Eidyn
Fort commands these hills
Farmers tending terraces
Fewer than last month
So many to Catreath gone

Aneirin returns
Gut-singing bloody slaughter;
"Noble three hundred
Merge their blood with English mud
Just brave Cynon fab Clynto
With me did reach Din Baer

The rest gone to carrion
High spirits less’ning lifespan!”

THE MURDER CAIRN

Beautiful city of Edinburgh
Where the tourist can drown his sorrow
By viewing your monuments & statues fine

William Macgonagall

Och! Nichol Muschat
Debauche, foolish, profligate
Grows tired of his wife
& dreaming terrible schemes
Cooks up cruel lies
To divorce her ‘ill repute’
But, failing, turns to murder

His poison too weak
So, walking to Duddingston,
Slit her pretty throat
& him hung not long after
Soon, this sorry scene
Draws tourists & their stones
To this pyramid of sin
SAINT ANTHONY’S CHAPEL

In the king’s park, on the declivity of Arthurs’ seat, was a beautiful chapel of gothic architecture, consecrated to saint Anthony; & there was a hermitage adjoining it, wherein a succession of anchorets, who have rested this weary age, lived remote from all the pleasures of a guilty world

Dr Chalmers

SAARCOPHAGI

I soon found that the rock contained all manner of strange crypts, crannies & recesses, where owls nestled, & the weasel brought forth her young

George Burrow

Amidst well-built stones
In eremite seclusion
Men pledg’d holy faith
To the divine Lord of Hosts
Souls bubbling with joy
In deserts & dark places
Or safe castles close
When cityscapes spread small

Below us sweet swans
Ply Prince Albert’s boating pond
Coots & Tufted Ducks
Little Grebes & Maple Geese
Chasing plastic bags
All in a feeding phrenzy

Eighteen thirty-six
A rabbit hunt, five young boys
Stumbl’d on a cave
Midst purple tuft & whinny
Matchlight sheens three tiers
Seventeen tiny coffins
Carv’d by expert hand
Seventeen dolls a-sleeping
Clad in clothing custom-made

Speculation rife!
Amateurs, academics
Voodoo & Witches
But now, modern consensus;
Sad victims of Burke & Hare
ARD-NA-SAIGHEID

Beneath, the old town reared its dark brow, & the new one stretched its golden lines, while, all around, the varied charms of nature lay scattered in that profusion, which natures hand alone can bestow

Susan Ferrier

High as the arrows
Buffeted on Arthur’s Seat
Basalt butterfly
Midst eagle-peaks all-seeing
Lothian’s monarch
Lammermuir & Queensferry
Vision oer the vent
Britannia beams breast-plated,
First Muse of the six
“Pray hear & help my stories!”

Points out a path pre-plotted
Five more faerie mounds
& their teeming streets between

JAMES HUTTON

We have come to know that living creatures evolve, that continents drift, that stars & galaxies are born, mature, grow old & die. We salute the memory of James Hutton, who opened our minds to these wondrous possibilities

Professor Donald McIntyre

Man’s mind locks on rock
Polymath epiphany
Molten material
Uplifting, folding strata
Time’s immensity
As intrusive dolerite,
Granite arteries,
Sweep vain, biblical cobwebs
From moderniz’d thought
Enlight’ning humanity
Long before the Beagle sail’d

Mankind’s progressive
Encyclopaedic empire!
Geology! Avanti!
RADICAL ROAD

If I were to choose a spot from which the rising or setting sun could be seen to the greatest possible advantage, it would be that wild path winding around the foot of the high belt of semi-circular rocks, called Salisbury crags.

Walter Scott

Over old quarries
Which paved the streets of London
& Scott’s smooth passage
Which tamed rapacious weavers
Georgie dried her tears
Far too high she cried no more -
Wild Morningside Speed
Salisbury Crag too potent -
& leant oer the ledge
So much sadness in her heart
& stepp’d off the edge
From those miseries to part

As they fix’d their climbing ropes
Men found her in the morning

HOLYROOD

Under the lion-crouching shadow of arthurs seat
Let me walk by the ruined palace, in the vision of history

Ruthven Todd

Thro these snowy woods
King David went a-hunting
By White Stag halted

Before his bloody goring
Cross forms betwyx its antlers

Beast bolts thro the park
As David prais’d his saviour
“On this very spot
An abbey must be founded!”

By that sacred site
Mansion of Alban monarchs
Rises royally

First seat of Scottish power
By Parliament amplified
Mary was depressed
She wanted real life & here she was
Acting in a real play, with real blood in it

Norman Macaig

Mary, Queen of Scots
Far from her Gallic glamour
Wearying of dreary psalms
Went to bed abored
Not knowing that night
A love-crazed Campeador
Had hidden ‘hind her curtains;
Her lashes true disciple
Surprised, Ronsard reciting,
His heart’s Cassandra;
So soon her thrill abolish’d
By stern, artless ministers
Her ‘wretched rhymester’
Beheaded quite cruel!

I am now at the gates of Edinburgh
Daniel Defoe

DEVOLUTION

There shall be a Scottish parliament. Through long years these words were first a hope, then a belief, then a promise. Now they are reality. This is as moment anchored in history

Donald Dewar

While her majesty, The Queen, is in residence
Her Royal Pipers murdering ‘Scotland the Brave’
I muse upon my modern British history
Reflected by this ludicrous, giant Jungle Jims
Devolution’s legacy, when Scotia’s legend
Reclaim’d ancestral majesty, however shorn
Of throne & crown & scepter, but happily, instead
Finds independence in expenditure fiscal;
For that, thank the Tories, & those eleven years
When Thatcher ripp’d the piss out of the common Scot -
On first spreading her wings most of the country baulk’d
From referendum freedom, voting Briton-brain’d
But come the pledge of Mister Blair & that landslide
Unanimous, unanimous, a brave “YES-YES!”

ENRIC MIRALLES

Holyrood is ‘without parallel’ in 100 years of architecture

Senay Boztas

From his Catalan subconscious upsprung this ‘craze’
But motar manifestation cuts short his days
But there is more to this elephant than meets the eye
In it poetic elements all multiply
Tho to the common voyeur tis more marmite spread
Whether loving or hating it, a man still dead!
Methinks there is much beauty, as this dying swan
Arrang’d native materials before him gone
Chandeliers of Cairngorm quartz & fine tapestries
Spun fine by maidens of the Outer Hebrides
Building blocks of Kemny granite & Caithness stone
Touching Scots Oak each member bums on their ain throne
While outside, by the leaf-like pools, grows thistle dun
With other trees & flora Caledonian
SCOTCH POLITICS

It may always be hard, but it was worth it.
Scotland & England together on equal terms

Tony Blair

From Duns to Shetland, here, our austere peers have trekk’d;
Firmness, perseverance, lucidity, respect
Of them, all these are what we citizens expect

Beneath the stone of Arniston the members pass
Like gangs of squabbling teenagers back into class
& fill the beamy roof with white-hot waffling-gas

On Wednesday afternoons & thro the long next day
Committee interspers’d, but still the final say
Stamp’d with the royal seal five hundred miles away

But education, law & order, transport, health
& the proper distribution of Scotia’s wealth
Are surely better than hamiltonian stealth!

But best of all, one & all, can watch that surly crew
Beam live to every lounge on BBC freeview!

QUEENSBERRY HOUSE

I am not sorry to have seen the most picturesque (at a distance)
& nastiest (when near) of all capital cities

Thomas Gray

If you should ever pass by Reekie’s canary
Better settle your ass upon the bus-stop beam
Think of a mad bastard held under lock & key
Then ye should smell the blood & hear a curdling scream

Three centuries ago, as Union was form’d
When moblings ruled the show & ‘traitors’ homes were storm’d
Drumlanrig’s future Earl grew wide-eyed in his joy
A lovely little pearl, a ten-year kitchen boy

& they were both alone, & in a fiery fit
Knife slices blood & bone, flesh roasted on a spit
Then, with a dash of salt, he sat down to his meal
Where nobody could fault a noble imbecile!

& so, he avoided auld Scottish justice plain
That strange, tried & tested redemption of the sane!
ADAM SMITH

A philosopher who for his own glory & for the benefit of mankind had enlightened the world by the most profound & systematic treatise

Edward Gibbon

He boldly came to Panmure House when twelve long years Of researching the world was ready for an age, Preaching the wealth of nations, now his book appears Slowly, for twelve more winters, on an ink-blot page; All thro those heady sentences man’s progress steers

The essence of his epic opus goes like thus; Dynamic webs of interdependent strangers Control equilibrium, & we strive in this For better lives, engaging ingeneousness, Soon one-by-one we specialize to listlessness

So, when produce outweights more than we can ingest The artist burrows in like a tick in the armpit Filling those soulless voids in each capitalist, Sans eyes, sans song, sans tongue, sans original wit

SCOTTISH POETRY LIBRARY

It is hard to think of a better symbol of the kind of searching, dynamic nation the new Scotland may yet become

Catherine Lockerbie

As pleasure makes us read & reading makes us know & knowing makes us sing, & singing makes us grow ‘Tis best to set in store the reliquary of song A merry house of books which we can march among To cherish & sustain our ancient heritage As Homer heard the tales of Menalean rage

Down here on Crichton’s Close a nation’s soul is kept The surge MacDiarmid surf’d, the dirges Dunbar wept Thro Scotland’s love of art & Gulbenkian gift An avalanche of books available for sift Come pile a table high, as shelf-by-shelf we comb To find that special verse or take those verses home

If ever passing by, when under poesy’s spell, Come nestle in this fane where kindred spirits dwell! Come pause & swoon & sigh
DUNBAR’S CLOSE

When I looked out in the morning it is as if I had waked in utopia

George Elliot

If you find the Royal Mile fizzing furious & the traffic grating vile against your sun-boil’d brain
Then, entering a remarkable oasis,
One will almost feel one’s mellower self again
For here the Mushroom Trust a garden has funded
Crafted by Seamus Filor, quite Italian,
With shrubby obelisks & plush walls pyrcanthan

As step-by step the visitor steps back in time
Beyond the ornateness three Poles doze on the grass
Bulwark’d by sleeping bags blagg’d from army surplus
An old philosopher, nearby, watches time pass
& I, all in a flash, reach inspiration’s brink
A little light drizzle smudging my fresh-cast ink
I took a bench beneath a tree to sit, & think

ROBERT FERGUSSON

No sculptured marble here nor pompous lay
No storied urn nor animated bust
This simple stone directs pale Scotias way
To pour her sorrows oer a poet’s dust

Rabbie Burns

From the Palace to the Castle is one Scotch mile
But every now & then we men must pause awhile
As tourists do, halting to view this statue fine
Of Reekie’s laurell’d bardie, who, once, line-by-line,
Swath’d his native Scottish sweetly across the tongue
& round his feisty harpings when he was hip with song
For wand’ring round this ‘wee stane world’ life fill’d his een
The fechtin, stinkin, swinkin, drinkin Embro scene!

But poet’s lots are poor & in Bedlam he died
Just twenty-four, but to the fore his writings bide
& without him we’d have nae Burns, who knew the same
& out of his ain pocket bless’d his brother’s name
& in the Canongate kirkyard his tomb improve
Where only to the waxing moon dost fame’s star move
**CANONGATE KIRK**

The church came to the Canongate before the houses

*Ronald Selby Wright*

There is something celestial about this place
Voila la Cite Sainte, assise a l’occident
The high, white-wash’d walls & woodwork of sky-blue
A la terra la terra, l’alma al cielo,
Whence, from the piano one, turns to face the pews
An organ from Frobenius has startl’d soul
“DEUS MAGNUS DOMINUS,” long, alien pipes
Twinkle as a student commences time with god
Conversing with divinity in sweep & swell

Now, under heraldrix of Castle Governors
& banners ablaze with regimental honours
I take a sneaky seat upon the royal pew
Far comfier a perch than Her Highness’s loo,
Sat swooning to the music of my native land!

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**THE WORLD’S END MURDERS**

I am of the view that the evidence taken at its highest in context of a whole is neutral as to whether or not he was involved in acting with force or violence against the girls

*Judge Lord Clark*

They’d both been looking forwards to a guid neet oot
On the ran-dan-dan, getting’ reekin,’ kissin’ boys,
‘Ms Eadie’ & ‘Ms Scott’, the coroner wrote down
Both bound & gagged, both raped & batter’d, strangl’d both
Thro dread & dolour dire their nightmares did unfold
“We give them leave to die that may no longer live!”
Quoted suppos’d ‘consensual’ Angus Sinclair
His sister’s husband, Gordon Hamilton, was there
For both their semen spunk’d upon wee Christine’s coat
Before, in fields near Haddington, both bodies dump’d.

Embro’ froze paralyzed like Yorkshire’s Ripper-daze
& its most famous pub hurl’d down to infamy,
    It took thirty years to match Sinclair’s DNA,
Who slipp’d justice by blaming Gordon’s guilty corpse!
THE GREAT PLAGUE OF EMBRO

The wynds down which an English eye may look but into which no English nose would willingly venture for stinks older than the union are to be found there

Robert Southey

The fleas rush’d in fae Leith, a sommer’s inferno
Blaz’d deadly lava thro worm-ridden warren wynds
Like World’s End & Tweeddale, the latter soon lock’d up
Entombing folk at hame til death or miracle
Bread & wine the only occasional succour
While all of Reekie’s business creaks to a standstill
The moses bundles filling as long the broom burns
Quite fallible, & Tweeddale in those desp’rate days
Was more like an awful series of Big Brother
With no get-out clause, nor a hope of eviction
Just the long slow agony of bubonic bile

With tether snapp’d he could not hack it any more
& thought he’d try & fly the rooves... oer Fountain Close
A musketball blew out his brains, from rooftop falls

JOHN KNOX

He is the one Scotchman to whom, of all others, his country & the world owe a debt

Thomas Carlyle

Friends come & climb the steps a-facing Fountain Close
& send creative consciousnesses hurtling past
Now summon up beside you this brilliant man
For she is Scotia’s most noble ecclesiaste
Who with Calvin convers’d & cursing Papal crimes
From this sacred street-altar sermon’d in thunder
& went so far as to call for Queen Mary’s death
A treason exploited in protestant revolt
That swept the French to Leith to save their ailing faith,
Now, Scot & Englishman, allied in religion,
Drove the papists home, & as they fled they left
A mighty island fortress of reformation!

Then if this the castle of Protestant revolt
Those services of Knox are rocks that built its walls!
THE DRUMMER BOY

The people were not as willing to live sweet & clean as other nations, but delighted in stench & nastiness

Daniel Defoe

If ye should ever sit awhile in Hunter’s Square
Please choose the dead of night, when nobody is there
With Whistle Binkies shut & taxis gone to sleep
Then ye might hear a drumming coming from the deep

A tunnel they had found up at the Castle keep
A hole so small & round, sized for a chimney sweep
& so a boy was sent into that dark, dank hole
A-drumming as he went down at a snail-pace crawl
‘Rat-a-tat! Rat-a-tat!’ they follow’d his course down
Along the royal road thro Reekie’s list’ning town
Until beneath the Tron the drumming ceas’d its show,
“A wretched soul,” they qoud, “Come death & rid his woe!”

But still with straining ears, these many years ahence,
    One hears the ‘rat-tat-tat’ of shatter’d innocence!

THE GREAT FIRE OF EMBRO

There could not be a more beautiful fireworks

Lord Cockburn

In the year of Missolonghi, as romance died
There was a case of journalistic sabotage
The Scotsman paid an arsonist to plant a spark
& destroy the Courant’s renaissant readership
& soon a hot blaze spread like a grim contagion
Dry houses crumbl’d like tuberculosis lungs
Tho engines rudimentary put out the flame
In the night a fire-sprite across High Street leapt
Where heaps of rescued goods litter’d every pavement
To nestle in the Tron steeple, that queer Dutch thing,
All iron & wood, gilded with strange ornament
That soon was hot as Hades, they could see fae Fife,
As with a groaning heave out of the sky she fall
To be rebuilt all splendid, sandstone sky-throne tall!
Edina! Scotias darling seat
All hail thy palaces & towers
Where once, beneath a monarch's feet
Sat legislation's sov'reign powers

Rabbie Burns

UPPER ROYAL MILE

CLOSES FOR HORSES

The streets, & the row of houses on either side of it, take up the whole breadth; so that which way soever you turn, either to the right, or to the left, you go downhill immediately, & that so steep, as is very troublesome to those who walk in those side lanes which they call Wynds, especially if their lungs are not very good

Daniel Defoe

Down the old Fleshmarket I heard a friend of mine was dead
(Poor Jason used to busk Rose Street until his fingers bled)
Down Stevenlaw’s Garfunkles had put out some pre-stale bread
Down Jackson’s lay me down upon an acupuncture bed
But Lyon’s was a mouldy swamp with rubbish random spread
Down New Assembly dance halls gallant tanzerin once tread
Along Bell’s Wynd the Royal Mile with Cowgate’s stag-do wed
Adown the Old Stamp Office nippers round their playground sped
By Burnettts’s Close & Covenant past dead-end was I led
Across the street North Foulis & Gedde’s Entry nothing said
But Anchor was much better with its cobbl’d Old Town cred
As was the Old Assembly mark’d by Comiston’s well-head
Now rain lash’d down, the brollyless into tall Borthwick fled
With Fishmarket’s twee spaciousness my sanctuary instead
THE FRINGE

Maul’d by the savage critics,
the student company pleads
Mitigating factors

Liz Lochead

While upper classes plotted a pure festival of art
Eight sep’rate private enterprises opt to play a part
& brought a sense of humour to these show so serious
Leaving the internationalists very furious
But year-by-year these ‘unnoficials’ to a giant grew
That now upon the Royal Mile has this modern HQ
Where one can get one’s programme, buy a ticket for the shows
But choices here so very vast, best one follows one nose
Thro flashy, brashy fashion as gatecrashers hold their own
From upstanding ovations to the tumbleweedy groan
From Dudley Moore & Peter Cook to Tony Slattery
Plying the panel Perrier with wine & flattery
Back on the heaving high street when the flyer blizzard falls
What swirl of entertainment plays these great al fresco halls

GOOGLE HOLLY GREIG

As a city, Edinburgh is a two-faced bitch
Quintin Jardine

Up by the Mercat Cross where once the Maiden’s teeth did smile
A pocket of protestor’s chest against the paedophile
Friends, readjust from things ye ken, this is a tayle quite vile
Tho little Holly handicapp’d her mother call’d her queen
Alas her father pimp’d her to the gimps of Aberdeen
Each high in social circles, an elitist limosine
They rap’d that wee waif senseless every week for teary years
Until she told her mother in the vale of wailing tears
When in a flash of whispering true justice disappears
So she was made to flee her hame, what’s more flee Scotia’s land
When even the First Minister dismiss’d her out of hand
For secretive societies always together stand
Yet unavoidable, unassailable, is this truth
Rich gangs of paedo-rapists prey upon our helpless youth
JENNY GEDDES
(from John Stuart Blackie)

I leave the busy, crowded street
To step within your silent aisles
Where the dead hearts of centuries beat
Beneath your storied roof, St Giles

Will Ogilvie

On the twenty third of July, Sixteen thirty seven
One Sabbath morn from High Saint Giles the solemn peel given
King Charles had sworn that Scottish men should pray by printed rule
So sent a book, but never dreamt of danger from a stool

The bishop & the dean came in with muckle gravity
Right smug & sleek, but lordly pride was lurking in their ee
The dean he to the altar went, & with a solemn look
He cast his eyes to heaven & then read from this new book

In Jenny’s heart the blood upswell’d, she was no mutton-mule
& sudden started to her legs to stoutly grab the stool
As when a mountain wildcat springs upon a rabbit small
So Jenny on the dean sprang with the gush of holy gall

“Hie villain, daur ye say mass at my lug thou popish fool!
NO! NO!” she said & at his head she flung the three-leg stool!

LUCKENBOOThS

The sudden burst of genius m which to a foreigner must seem to have sprung up in this country by a sort of enchantment

Dugald Stewart

Across the High Street from St Giles, when closes flow’d with booze
A row of shops ramshackle stood for poets to peruse
Wherein the latest plays from London formally leant out,
A penny each from Ramsay’s library, Edina’s muse,
For without him a whimper, not that bold, enlighten’d shout

Not only literati buzz’d about those bustling hives
For husbands would be brooches bought from superstitious wives
In turn that pretty love token was pinn’d upon the shawl
Of their first smiling cherub to protect both crib & crawl

Fast forward to these modern days where folk still raise the stalls
Of jewelry, guitar straps, tie-died tops & painted bones
Of silver stirling, celtica & semi-precious stones
Of face painting & woollen flowers twirling round the poles
As music from a busker-boy their passing trade enthralls
TOLBOOTH

On the west end of the great church, but in a different building, is the tollbooth, or common prison, as well for criminal debtors, & a miserable hole it is, to say no worse of it

Daniel Defoe

Och! In diesem inner, auf allen seiten hintergrund,
Sometimes we miss the history beneath us on the ground
Between Saint Giles & Luckenbooths follow that train of brass
To that holed heart of cobblestones where folk spit as they pass
Remembering that viscous, lightless vault unsanitized
Where prisoners would rot in hell, a devil den despised

As when a flock of seagulls swoop & strafe th’unwelcome fox
A mob rail’d round Captain Porteus in his tinder box
For they were fucking furious & braying for his blood
The door too strong, so bonfire burnt to blaze away the wood
& soon him dragg’d out screaming in the thick of smoke & flame
& torn apart, the justicars all hung their heads in shame!

Back in those days we common folk could counteract intrigue
Not like today when TV blanks the case of Holly Greig

SEVENTEEN HUNDRED & SEVEN

Now there's ane end of ane old song

Chancellor Seafield

Remember Scotland’s parliament! Before it sold downstream
Handful of greedy landowners debunk’d the Bruce’s dream
& even then, before the vote, the verdict was in doubt
But nudge & bribe, cajole & fudge son won London the bout
Despite common concensus pleading ‘Leave us Scottish be,
An Englishman is English & a Scotsman he is free!’
But time must turn to progress, twas a blessing as we’ll see…

…Now medieval pageantry, the stone of Arniston
Are left to fading history & Dalkeith garden gone
For working with the Whitehall knights, that nest of Whiggamores
The Scots access’d fresh markets far beyond her stony shores,
The empire of the English now cordially renamed
The Empire of Great Britain, by Hobart & Boston fam’d
A conjoin’d pride of which no Scot should ever feel asham’d
BURKE & HARE

Down the close & up the stair
Ben the hoose wi burke & hare
Burk’s the butcher Hare’s the thief
Knox the man who buys the beef

Traditional

Standing beneath the Saltire marking West Parliament Square
Come pause & wrest moment to remember Burke & Hare
These are two men in all this famous city’s infamy
Who sing above the rest with a satanic symphony
For seven pounds a corpse they murder’d sick, decrepit drunks
Delivering the bodies up to Doctor Knox in trunks
Who practiced vivisection to enhance th’enlighten’d mind
For who would miss a wastrel from the charnel West Port wynds?

As corpse found beneath Burke’s bed, Hare knew the party over
& turning the king’s evidence shunted off to Dover
While Burke received god’s punishment as twenty thousand gloat
His eyes popp’d out, his legs flail’d wide, that tight rope burnt his throat
His body, then, to KARMA sent, & public’ly dissected
While Knox fled from the city, his career quiet dejected

BANK WARS

The hairt of Scotland’s hairt
Sydney Goodsir Smith

When striding into Bank Street, with these sonnets, on our walks
There is a tayle ye’ll have to hear as sure as money talks;
After the Act of Union monopolies were bann’d
& soon the Bank of Scotland had a rival in the land
This Royal Bank, quite devious, bought up the Old’s bank-notes
& cunningly presented them for payment in one go
Forcing a vast recall of loans to solve that sterling flow
Integrity & reputation vanish’d in a flash
As deep friendship collapses over dribs & drabs of cash

But money makes the world go round & reputations heal
The Old Bank swiftly found its feet & once again could lend,
Forever wed to its mutually destructive friend
The money-monkeys scratch’d their heads, & kicking at the heel
It was no use, they call’d a truce, & shar’d the profit’s meal
MAJOR WEIR’S COACH

I met the Buddha in Edinburgh:
Hunched in a doorway in the west bow
A can of Carlsberg in his hand

Brian McCabe

When standing over West Bow at the right time of the year
When moons are new, then you may view the coach of Major Weir
Drawn by six coal-black horses, snorting sulphur, flaming een
Its driver very headless with a phantom grace serene
Inside that misty carriage sits a marriage made in hell
A warlock & his sister-witch condemn’d by heaven-spell
For when alive they feign’d the perfect piousness of life
But in the dark would sacrifice a beggar with a knife
Thus Major Weir went to the noose, Jove’s terrors on his soul
His sister strangl’d at the stake & burnt as angel’s fall

So, standing over West Bow at the right time of the year
When stars are in conjunction, then the sorcerers appear
All in a seven second flash they zip along the ground
Then gallop down the hole to Hell with terrifying sound

BRODIES CLOSE

Six, seven, eight storyes high were the houses; storey piled above storey, as children build with cards

Charles Dickens

O! to be a well-respected gentleman about toon;
Well Deacon Brodie had the chance but deftly turn’d it doon & yes, he was respected, & whenever went outside
But that was Doctor Jekyll & by night this Mister Hide
Would gamble, booze & burgle, paying off increasing debt
Until his game was rumbl’d, to escape the closing net
He sped off to the continent, but there made a mistake
A letter home soon swept a Bow Street Runner in his wake
Who found his charge in Amsterdam & bundl’d back for trial
He faced the gallows of his making with the wryest smile
His wig full dress’d & powder’d made, beneath his corpse, a pile

His mistresses all wept that day, some old, some in their teens & pass’d their tears of sadness onto all their growing beans
These days a third of Edinburgthers carry carry Brodie’s genes!
RABBIE BURNS

He used to sit in a very small room with one or two friends only; but many were the visitors who called in to gaze upon what they called the ‘coffin of the bard’

J Stewart Smith

There is a certain knack to becoming an immortal
As Orpheus’s heartbeat passes thro Pluto’s portal
& Burns arriv’d at Baxter’s Close by Lady Stair’s fine house
Singing of reeking haggises & a wee tim’rous mouse
& even as, on that first day, he copp’d a ‘gardy-loo’
Went shit-caked, wand’ring city-streets, without a bloody clue
He knew if he could sing his songs the world was sure to hear
& so, oor sweet Sordello, soon found Johnnie Dowie’s beer
With enough space for a fiddle, & as the Argo’s cox
He beats enchaunting rhythm thro his native tides & rocks
& soon, at Mrs Carfrae’s door, his destiny would stand
“Your little book of poetry the gossip of the land!”

& soon, to Edinburgh, in thanks, oor bardie’s pen address’d
Verse added to this new addition, both Edina-bless’d

THE HUB

Furthganyan Embro folk come hame
For three weeks in the year
& find Auld Reekie not the same
Fu sturrit in a steir

Robert Garrioch

Twyx Castle Hill & Johnstone Terrace many men admire
The rafters of this meeting house, its skyline’s tallest spire
Heart of the City festivals, Sir Rudolf’s art-for-hire

See Valery Gergiev & Tajana Vassiljeva
Then spin-cycle flamenco, or Georgian Ballerina!

Praise the Lyceum! Praise the Playhouse! Praise the Usher Hall
Those perfect post-war platforms for the blossoming of soul

Soon Porgy Bess, caught by tempest, sang rhapsodies in blue
To acolytes of culture drawn across the global stage
Banishing Auswich, austerity - lets poetry renew

Here Opera & Theatre weds Culture together
Like some saturnalian theory of literature
...there’s

Many a safari frae Ramsay Lane to Worlds End Close

Duncan Glen

Before Sir Byng’s black-hole suck’d culture’s space-ship to Reekie
There was a pagan brood wherein the muses all did well
Its patriarch a poet, & native words his passion
Despite Augustan couplets being everywhere the fashion
& he collected songs & ballads long before Sir Scott,
Yes, without him No Fergusson, no Burns would we have got
Expanding lizab than, he builds Reekie’s first playhouse,
On that first night, delighted, “Whar’s yer Wullie Shakespeare noo!”
& he was very clever, making plays & poems pay
& built a pretty house, an octagon they call’d Goose Pie
Ou tout est riche, comme une bijouterie bariolee
Where, from his suckling pack, another Allan, wields his knife
Carving his peacock slices for admiring folk to see
Ah yes! The famous Ramsays, Embro’s royal family

By universal judgement, Edinburgh has a place, possibly the highest place, in the small group of the great towns of European consciousness for romance & physical charm

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman
CAPTAIN PORTEUS

The area of the Grassmarket resembl’d a huge dark lake or sea of human heads, in the centre of which arose the fatal tree, tall, black & ominous, from which dangl’d the deadly halter

Sir Walter Scott

Long before the Murrayfield masses 
Cruel public hangings entertain’d us 
In places like spacious Grassmarket 
A congress to vent one’s frustration 
& on one terrible occasion 
Folk found themselves incens’d at justice 
Pathetic crimes punish’d capital 
& slowly throng’d to set those poor boys free 
The Captain on that day cut no thrift 
& order’d bullets into the flesh 
Of that heaving mob, some Amritsar, 
Scotch Peterloo, tho him brought to court 
& condemn’d to death, “You are repreiv’d!” 
Porteus told in his Tolbooth cell...

GEORGE HERRIOTS

Coming back to Edinburgh is to me like coming back home  
Charles Dickens

Reekie’s Eton towers tall 
Proud behind the Telfer Wall 
Once, twas Hogwarts orphanage 
Now - parental privilege 
& when Easter comes each year 
Skulking chess-addicts appear 
As did I some years ago 
When my knight’s pawn stole the show 
Granny’d died some weeks before 
She was with me, yes I’m sure 
With my winnings I flew south 
Follow’d Arno from her mouth 
Alla Capo, where I spread 
Granny’s ashes, hands on head
THE FOREST CAFE

We have put out records, thrown street parties, hosted more than a hundred exhibitions, built a darkroom, offered workshops on everything from Arabic to crocheting, grown a garden, given out thousands of pounds in grants, built a practice studio, started a swap library and a free shop, made friends, battled the bureaucracy, hired out free bikes and much more.

Forest Café Website

Close by Bristo’s studenty Square
There is a nest of hippies, where
We are welcome one & all

For friendly felicitation
Of film house, art installation
& live music free for all

Only falafals crave money
Reinvested accordingly
To preserve the gift for all

Drum-circles, wi-fi, dance workshops
Rehearsals, tai-chi, tea, book swaps
For the benefit of all

For every taker somebody must give
This is the best way those like us must live!

GREYFRIAR’S BOBBY

Let his loyalty & devotion be a lesson for us all

The Dog Aid Society

Jock Gray moves to Embro’s streets – gets a job
A Bobby on his beats
Wee Skye Terrier completes
Him, as Fanny Brawne did Keats

Alas, Constable Ninety died – Bobby
Felt robb’d of canine pride
As beside that grave he cried
Swore he’d never Jock’s side

As night-by-night Bobby returns – his name
More famous grew than Burns
Free license for his sojourns

Every one-o-clock gun – by Jock’s pal fed
Til dead & buried gone,
Joins his master in Heaven
COVENANTERS

We shall sincerely, really, and constantly, through the grace of GOD, endeavour, in our several places and callings, the preservation of the reformed religion in the Church of Scotland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, against our common enemies

The National Covenant

As hungry lions refuse to eat grass
Spurning Episcoplian mass
Presbyterians of every class
Make their signatures all known – crown’d spies lurk
In Greyfriars kirk - on a flat gravestone

After the battle of Bothwell Brig
In this open kirkyard, like a pig
The starving Covenanters piss-swig
Some sign’d their loyalty – some tried
Some died, some escap’d, some sent oersea

In the opposite corner
Of that papal prisoner
Stands sandstone in strict honour – dust & salt
Halts passing passenger

DOLLY THE SHEEP

Edinburgh is a hotbed of genius

Tobias Smollett

Well, Roslin’s Wilmot may be sent to Hell
But prob’ly not, as far as I can tell
For cloning a single mammary cell
& doing a Frankenstein more than well
A little lamb did gel – its long life span
Broke man’s biblical spell

Now Alba’s love of things historical
Has placed her midst engines industrial
& space capsules & arms robotical
Stuff’d & spinning round in a glass bottle
In long sabbatical – ‘fore her genome
Cloned once more for cattle!

So this sheep is our future, bloomin’ ‘ell -
A waxwork on a circus carousel!
SCOTTISH LAW

Edinburgh is not without such fellows as shoplifters, houserobbers, & pickpockets, in proportion to the number of people, as much as London itself

Daniel Defoe

Common law rules English courts
But Scotland proudly diff’rent
Judgment, based on civil Rome,
Frames thinking independent
Upon what really happen’d
Not flaw-flapping precedent
How very jurisprudent!

As when soot-skinn’d Joseph Knight
Came to the Court of Session
Tho’ enslaved in Jamaica
By the dictates of reason
In Britain him a worker
Where slavery forbidden
“Free him!” the courts decision!

WILLIAM MCGONNAGAL

If you were a poet, would you sooner live in Edinburgh or Dundee

Bob Watt

Being Embro born
Tired of cabbage-scorn
Life’s breast almost worn
Back hame he came
Noises in his head
Bronchitis abed
Soon Sir Topaz dead
But not his fame

To conclude this lay
In his praise I say
In the present day
I do declare
His poems, day-by-day
Sold everywhere
The staff were so nice & so patient, & allowed me to order on espresso & sit there for hours, writing until Jessica woke up. You can get a hell of a lot of writing done in two hours if you know that’s the only chance you are going to get.

JK Rowling

Near Rutherford’s literary fane
Where Hugh MacDairmid met Maclean
“She’s here again!” piped the staff
This single mother & her ink
Her flat too cold to sit & think
Bought just one drink – her autograph
Pricelesizes first editions
Most amazing of transitions
From revisions in the caff…

…The Harry Potter phenomenon!
From Quidditch on your PS3
To term-time on a DVD
The Open House serves on – today’s tune
The Spoon’s shabby-chic, vintage version

SYLVANDER & CLARINDA

Under its humblest roofs, poets have dreamed & lovers have sung

Harry Lauder

In a town tea-party fancy
Pretty Nancy met her poet
That rhyming ploughman down from Ayr
She didn’t care, didn’t show it
Of city scandal both aware
As letters share their growing lust
The penny post binds cupid’s pair
& of their care but one they’d trust
Young Jennie Clow, her eager maid
Was by Burns laid, as poets must

Once promiscuous Potterrow
Has lost its glow, a plain old place
Of Teppanyaki restaurant -
Of passion’s pant there is no trace!
THE EDINBURGH REVIEW

Still must I hear – shall hoarse FITZGERALD bawl
His creaking couplets in a tavern hall
& I not sing, lest haply, Scotch reviews
Should dub me scribbler & denounce my muse

Lord Byron

O! How very apt! Bravo!
All this should please UNESCO
For in this building’s belfry
Stood Jeffrey at his window
Whose lighthouse steers his reader’s free
Beyond his native contree
With its cutting-edge reviews
Their pens defined the soul
O lovely flowering of the page
Our critics declare romantic;
All this made Byron sick!

“English bard or Scottish leech,
They are worse than thievish Creech
Better travel & self-teach!”

THE MEADOWS

Edinburgh is a real classy city

Beyonce

Auld Reekie’s lung
Both old & young
Slow stroll in ease
Frondescent trees
Where Ladyboys
Crank up the noise
& Hearts & Hibs
Broke shins & ribs
Where lovers meet
‘Neath Arthur’s Seat
& cyclists cruise
As bardies muse...

“All our art’s needs
This green park feeds!”
BRUNTSFIELD LINKS

I was shown one particular set of golfers, the youngest of whom was turned four score
Tobias Mollet

On the fringe of the Boroughmuir – times gone
Once monsters hunted here
Fierce White Boar & great Red Deer
& the Elk in crazed career

Log-by-log the burning trees
Reekie’s vicious winters ease

Now in such open spaces men devise
The game of Gowff, sacred in certain eyes
“Best way to ruin walks!” say the wise

Here tis free to pitch ‘n’ putt
Clapping happy or a ‘tut’

& when your round is done – cold drinks are sold
Ye Olde Golf Tavern
First Nineteenth under the sun!

SEAN CONNERY

This profusion of eccentricities, this dream in masonry & living rock is not a drop scene in a theatre, but a city in the world of reality
Robert Louis Stevenson

A Fountainbridge male model from his milk rounds did abscond
For of his face the directors of South Pacific fond
Soon of his acting talents film producers purr’d & whisk’d him from Kings Theatre with one sweet word
That word was ‘CASH!’ & tho it seem’d absurd
A local lad was now the new James Bond!

Who wields his accent like a wand
Star shooting famous ‘cross the pond
Et puis, tout la monde
Sean in real life preffer’d

His mixers stirr’d
On he spur’d
Scotch bird
Tax conn’d
Edinburgh is what a city ought to be, somewhere to live & walk about in

Sir John Betjemen

---

MORNINGSIDE

BRUNTSFIELD

Morningside is lovely and charming to be seen;
The gardens there are rich with flowers and shrubberies green
And sweet scented perfumes fill the air,
Emanating from the sweet flowers and beautiful plants there.

William McGonnagal

Approaching composition’s half-way point
Beyond towering Barclay Viewforth
Gillespie Place becomes Bruntsfield
Pointing toward Pentland panoramas
This City’s sunny side
Of respectable, well-mow’d gentility,
Children with massive lunch-boxes
Pristine & stately ladies
All treading ways once-haunted,
By lonely, gaunt theoclymenians
Hunting like hungry foxes
Long before Express Costcutter
& our pin-secret mastercards
Negated these throat-slitting needs
ERIC LIDDEL CENTRE

Architecturally speaking, there is no finer sight in Europe

* Muriel Spark *

Four congregations in conjunction
Suburban services numberless

Two mighty roadside spires;
Baptists & Episcopalians

Opposite, two churches united
Counteracting increasing absenteeism

Within North Morningside’s tomb
Religion’s reincarnated renaissance

Room-hire funds altruistic programs
Vital day care!

Yoga, Gymini, Judo, Tai-chi
Week-day community meditations

Thro such diversifying prayer-time
Human spirituality enhanced!

THE BORE STONE

Thousand pavilions, white as snow,
Spread all the Borough-moor below,
Upland & dale & down :-
A thousand, did I say? I ween,
Thousands on thousands, there were seen,
That chequer’d all the heath between
The streamlet & the town.

* Sir Walter Scott *

Remember Flodden’s flaunted field
About James’s banner
Scotia’s Campus Martius

The Old Braid Road
Romans, Longshanks, Wallace
& now all Alba’s pride

Beneath rain-lash’d Branxton Hill
Thrissle versus Rose
Billmen versus pikemen

Borderers slaughter’d, Highlanders annihilated
James another Arthur
Invading Morded’s Cornwall

Before London’s smug burial
His royal body immaculately embalm’d
THE DOM

We lived in Morningside Road and when the Dominion opened, next door at Churchill, we thought we were in heaven.

Joyce Messer

Bowman Gibson’s splendiferous Dominion cinema
Proudly independent
Dolby Surround Sound, leather Pullmans
Four fine screens

Opening night fifty years ago
High Fidelity
Stalls ninepence, front stalls six
Balcony one shilling

July nineteenth, two thousand ten;
Wild target
Twilight saga, Inception, Killers, Heartbreaker
Shrek Forever After

Thro modern, broadband banditry,
I’ve seen them already…

COLLUMCILE CENTRE

Columcille Ceilidh Band enables musicians with and without learning disabilities to play music for a wide range of events. Since we became available for public bookings in 2004, we have played a total of 180 events, ranging from music workshops to conference and wedding ceilidhs.

Collumcile Centre Website

Renounce, "Alack my strength!"
Whatever one’s disability
Rejuvenate!
Join one’s fellow afflicted
Integrate artistic imagination

Rudolf Steiner’s humanistic schools
Eight hundred worldwide
Anthroposophy!
Look inward, shine outward
Exhume raison d’etre

Every Thursday’s jammin’ time
Ceilidh, Jazz, Celtica
Gluing humans energetically together
Music’s universal glee-club
OLD MORNINGSIDE

The town, which had little changed until then, inconvenient, dirty, old-fashion’d, alcoholic, quarrelsome, poor, began to alter, first slowly, then in a convulsion

James Buchan

An authentic, dinky school-house
Privilege & patronage
Miss Falconars of Falcon Hall
Beautiful, refin’d, devout, charitable
Establish local education

Long before the library
This single, thirsty inn
Blacksmith’s forge, row of cottages
Form’d Edinburgh’s first stopping-place

From acorns, oaks
Conjoin’d estates of status
Sunward city suburb
Greenhill, Burghmuirhead, Easter, Wester, Canaan
Ruminate serene pleasures

THE CANNY MAN

After seeing some fantastic pubs in London and Canterbury I have to say that Canny Mans rates at the top.

Andrew Roseland

Canaan Lane corner
Schizophrenic Volunteer Arms
Glass of Glenlivet
Beyond sparring barside wits
Pool’d memory hangs
Like Viswakarma’s bow
Aladdin’s cave of bric-a-brac!

Dusty hunting trophies’
Carp, Stag, Falcon
Paintings, Posters, Calendars
Clocks from every city
Bottles, Broadsheets, Bullets
Keys, Corkscrews, Curiosities
New trinkets every second
ASTLEY AINSLE HOSPITAL

Make my compliments to all the Doctor’s of Edinburgh

Samuel Johnson

After damaging accidents
What next?
Rehabilitation!
Reekies’ secret garden
Post-traumatic care
Convalescent quietude
Cardiac strokes, amputees
Neurosciences!

Old gadgie smoking
Static wheelchair
Time’s backwards gyre
Swaddling bundle
& I, health-happy
Silently acknowledged

BLACKFORD HILL

Then listen to my earnest prayer
An’ open Blackford Hill ance mair;
Let us a’ pace the caller air
That sweeps its braes
An’ mak it worth the poets care
To sing your praise

James Ballantine

Above Mortonhall’s marvelous mansions
Morningside’s mountain towers
Arthurian views
Marmion’s garden city
Spectacular seas, historical hills
Reekie’s ribb’d back-bane
Inchkeith’s mysticism
Eftsoons, absorbing poesis
My thoughts steadily personify

Clio speaks clearly,
“We muses haunt shady groves,
Clear springs, sunny hills
Where yonder, atop Craiglockhart,
My sister awaits…”
HERMITAGE OF BRAID

Other great cities have magnificent buildings, great parks & gardens – man has made beautiful cities by his work; but Edinburgh possesses gifts straight from the hand of god

Rosaline Mason

Reekie’s Arcady – hidden
Delicious Drey forest
Umbrageous grots
Murm’ring waters
Enveloping DeBrady’s hunting lodge
Remodell’d anew –
Charles Gordon of Cluny
William Dick,
& most inspiringly,
John Skelton’s Athenian retreat

Huxley, Thackery, Robert Browning
Dante Gabriel Rossetti
Hunt among woodland wonderful
Before claret & fresh-slain game

BRAID VALLEY PARK

A stroll through the Braidburn Valley pPark is like a walk in the countryside with its steep sides, the braid burn overhung in parts by brambles, willows & hawthorns & with the Pentland hills spreading across the southern horizon

Ian Nimmo

Tree-lin’d, elongated bio-diversity
Echoing aeoglacial activity
Frame a demi-square of trees
Reekie’s Grecian theatre
Beneath grassy terrace’d seating
The late Queen Mother
Stylishly sail’d the burn
Upon decorated mini-barge
To see ‘Merrie England’s
Satyrs & full regalia
Watching open-skied

Today, her daughter
Whenever braving Scottish weather
Prefers the Tattoo’s comfier pews
THE MERCHANTS OF EDINBURGH

The Secretary was instructed to write a diplomatic letter to the farmer regarding his shepherd running his sheep over the greens and also burying dead sheep on the course.

Captain Ian Graham

- Effervescent affluence
- Adds another golf course
- Embro’s twenty-first
- Play’d below Pentland panorama
- Mordor magnificent
- Sheep roam the fairway
- Slain by sliced shots
- Beyond the bye-laws
- World Wars break out
- Victorian Crosses
- Honour the club exceedingly

Both Flight Leuitenent Cruikshanks & Stuart Macgregor
Never bought a drink

CRAIGLOCKHART

A city built on precipices, a perilous city. Great roads rush down like rivers in a spate, great buildings rush up like rockets

Gk Chesterton

- February faces full of frost
- Scream obscenities round Turmeau Hall
- Among neurasthenic officers
- Far from martial sport
- Wilfred found his Cadair Idris
- Next morning Siegfried woke him & gave his poesy realism
- Dream therapy
- Enhances increasing synthesis
- Poetical consciousness explodes
- Muses haunt the gardens
- Anthems for doom’d youth
OVER GORGIE

Installed on hills, her head near starry bowers
Shines Edinburgh, proud of protecting powers
William Drummond of Hawthornden

Imagining Craiglockhart’s hydropathic hotel
  From Penthouse descending
  Behind this beautiful building
  Woodland unwinds
  Imbrown’d by mantl’d ivy
  I flit among birdsong
  Like scented thyme
  Along the slanting path
  Past ripening raspberries
To gain this fair viewpoint
  Where sitting on rocks
  Calliope waits serenely
  & kissing me softly
  Drifts from my mind

WEST SIDE

Piled deep & massy, close & high
Mine own romantic town
Sir Walter Scott
OLYMPIA

Edinburgh is a city of silence until birth or brains open the social circle

HV Morton

I stand by windswept Meggetland
Watching childrens’ summer sports
& wonder, if among these games,
There’s a chrysalis superstar
This Cricketer? Discuss? Sprinter?
Each could be another Chris Hoy
Who on this ground once sharpen’d keen
His thirst for competition’s buzz
That swept him on his flying bike,
Like ET, to the starry heights,
First Briton since Henry Taylor
To win us three Olympic Golds
In one mad meet, full century
Divides these laurel’d Hercules

ZEPELINS

Suddenly a terrifying explosion occurred. Windows rattled, the ground quivered, pictures swung. We all gasped. I ran to the window and saw Vesuvius in eruption

David Kirkwood

Two month’s before Haig’s murd’rous Somme
The Kaiser felt he’d Reekie bomb
So sent a fleet of great cigars
To sail the forecourt of the stars
Two spy, at last, the satin Forth
By undimm’d lights framed south & north
They swerve & over Embro pass
Send thud & flash & flying glass
On Bonnington, Saint Andrew’s Square -
Crowds watch the carnage everywhere -
On Marshall Street, Saint Leonard’s Hill
Midst pandemonium… the kill!
Then bombing last the Corn Exchange
They turn for home – Scotland in range!
WATER OF LEITH

Beautiful city of Edinburgh! The truth to express
Your beauties are matchless I must confess
& which no one dare gainsay
But that you are the grandest city in Scotland at the present day

William McGonnagal

All in a moment’s soul serene
I come across a river’s course
Her edges fledg’d in tender green

Not far away her Pentland source
Observes this journey to the sea
Swap valley breadth for mountain force

& as she gambols thro Gorgie
She soothes the long sleep of the dead
By Chesser’s blessed cemet’ry

Now for allotments widely spread
Releases moisture on the air
Then vegetation better fed

For this we thank the civic chair
Smoothing her banks for all to share!

SAUGHTON HARRIER

We would have injected vitamin C if only they had made it illegal

Mark ‘Rent-boy’ Renton

This is the tayle of Willie Letch’
Prison did his bloody ‘ead in
So thought that he’d cut short his stretch
Smuggl’d trainers in wi’ beddin’

Painting a 5 upon his back
He hops the fences razor top
A group of joggers on the track
Just to their rear a wee, sly drop

With running jump that cunning man
With friendly smile blends with the flock
Light as a lightning glimpse he ran
Up to & thro the police road-block

As coppers watch’d his shrinking 5
He’d never felt this much alive!
SAUGHTON ROSE GARDENS

Then, all ye tourists, be advised by me,
Beautiful Edinburgh ye ought to go and see.
It's the only city I know of where ye can wile away the time
By viewing its lovely scenery and statues fine.

William McGonnagal

In Scotland, when upon the tongue
The raspb’ry sweet, then walk among
This swirl of knots, this thorn’d heaven
Where all God’s colours under sun
Bright petalling for everyone

Ahead the Fall, behind us Spring
Today my heart is burgeoning
For flowers & the summer fuse
With ev’ry year, each bud renews
This sov’ran gift of Embro’s muse

But no! there’s colour absent here
That colour smooth & silvery
But yes! these colours now appear
That colour here abides in me

TYNECASTLE

But the team that I mind
Is the team o lang syne
When we swept aa the prizes awa
An the boys in maroon
Where the pride o the toun
The best lads that e’er kicked a baw!

Donald Campbell

O! I’d love to be a Jambo
Buzzin’ round like bloody Rambo
& remembering the banter
When George Burley, at a canter
Won the first eight of his matches –
Time to batter down the hatches!

Normally, in this position
You would not expect division
But then Romanov, the tosser
Thought himself the better bosser
& cutting short George Burley’s term
Such a relief breath’d the Old Firm

Promising meritocracy…
Mid-table mediocrity!?
FACTORYLAND

A city of dull black tenements & crass concrete housing
schemes which were populated by scruffs, but the town still
somehow being run by snobs

Irvine Welsh

Twyx Tynecastle & Murrayfield
Auld Reekies streets all mesh’d with steel
Pipes & bridges, barb’d-wire fences
Forklifts, truckers & cylinders

MacFarlan Smiths, streams of hot bleach
While oor Northern Distillery
Keeps Scotland drunk in drink & drams

For, with the Union Canal
So close, work was made viable
McVities biscuits soon moved in
With Cox’s well-made gelatine

& with the railway trundling past
& workers in fertility
Industry loved Embro at last

MURRAYFIELD

I’ve hardly ever had to pay to get in

Bill Maclaren

My first months in Scotland bready
Working for barnpot Rock Steady
Where as a day-glo watchy-man
Saw Celtic play AC Milan
Then when the rugby came to town
I stash’d my jacket, sat me down
Pretend my seat was worth a mint
After a little turnstile stint!

As weighty talents merge & part
Lords of the Empire’s finest art
With Scot & Taffy mingling free
I fell in love with live rugby

For those not born for great affairs
In these contests bold conquest shares!
TOM IMRIE

I think I had a bit more stamina in the last 30 seconds than the other guy but I still didn’t fight well. Because I hadn’t fought well, I thought I had got beat. It was an emotional night but the main thing is you have got to fight well and I didn’t think it was one of my better nights

Tom Imrie

In Gorgie, forty years ago
A local boxer stole the show
& tho fae Leith got nae hassle,
His granda’ went on Tynecastle!
Now with the Commonwealth in synch
They turn’d this Murrayfield ice-rink
Into fiestas of squar’d ropes
Where one lad bares all Scotland’s hopes…
“I hope he wins!” “I hope he copes!”
“The Zambian is on the ropes!”

Tho stoumach ulcers spasm’d pain
Now following a jabby hunch
He set off such a sizzling punch
& won his gold with teeth-crack crunch

MURRAYFIELD LAWN TENNIS CLUB

Such honours come seldom to the history of any club & we should all feel proud that Norma plays as a member of Murrayfield & in so doing, has brought notice & distinction to the clubs name as well as her own

Annual Report

Upon a bench I phantasize
Of Mrs Boothman’s apple pies
Smokie the Poodle nipping heels
Hot pots of tea & home-made meals
Wooden handles make hands blister
Everybody Mrs, Mr,
Or Miss, of pretty face & curve -
Eye-candy for the secret perv
Who lusts for frills each time they serve -
& nobly nods as out they crash
To Norma Seacy’s forehand smash!

“She’s won Junior Wimbledon!”
Ageing members tell each new one
Traditional custodians!
KIDNAPPED

Gin like myself ye’re Embro-bred
& loe a guid-gaun ballant
In auld Scots style aboot the mile
Whaur ye yince played as callant
Then hae this gratis

Forbes Macgregor

Robb’d of rightful inheritance
By his evil uncle’s pretence
David Balfour, a teenager
Becomes the bold adventurer
& meets a man named Allan Breck
The sole flotsam of his shipwreck
& in those pre-Culloden days
When Jacobites were tearaways
They solder’d up & doon the land
Then back in Reekie made a stand
& won back David’s golden grand!

Up to this spot their tayle then trace;
They parted ways near Western Place
Both gushing love from friendship’s face

MENAGERIE

There’s always something new in the zoo

Max Richmond

When Noah’s Ark left two-by-two
They’d hurry back in if they’d knew
They’d one day end up in a zoo,
For all the f***g world to view;
The Wolverine, the Kangaroo
The Lesser, spiral-horn’d Kudu
The Chimpanzees in pirate crew
The Turaco of violet hue
The coarse-quill’d, stiff-claw’d, casque’d Emu
Flies flocking to the Rhino poo
The Pygmy Hippo, & what’s new
The Ocellated Turkey too!

I climb the walls, midst human herds

An Alcatraz of Beasts & Birds!
COSTORPHINE HILL

Tae stand an’ walch frae oot the wooded west
The heich ranks o her dignity gang by
An see it surgein’ seaward, crest on crest
Her lang swell merchan’ ridged against the sky

George Campbell Hay

By scenes like these our souls are stirr’d;
The lush fairway of Blackhall’s third
Leads eyes to Embro while she purr’d
‘Neath sunny spheres, as this poet
Rests awhile & thankful fo’ it!

About us Periwinkles glow
As Rowan, Holly, wild Willow
Add to the city’s largest wood
& free for all, & that is good
For yon that fence, for a tenner
Wee plains of plastic Africa

As one wood drive arrives on green
I saunter off, content, serene
An avid fan of vistas seen!

COSTORPHINE TOWER

Far set in town & smoke I see
Spring gallant from the shadows of her smoke
Cragged spired & turreted, her virgin fort beflagged

Robert Louis Stevenson

A true Rapunzel in my rhyme
Sir Walter’s natal steps I climb
Up to its corbell’d parapet
In July sun, my chest asweat
As Hektor’s epic gaze did set
From Ida on fair Ilium
This Coleum Britannicum
Stirs me to think of better songs
For here dost Telassar renew!
Then Scotia to this turret drew
First goddess of this fable-land
In coilan dress, claymore in hand
& with a wink she bade me well
Then vanish’d in an elfin spell
What other capital city short of Lhasa stands so proudly & nakedly in defiance of the elements
Charles McKeen

THE SHORE

CITY LIMITS

City of venerable sky lines
Christine de Luca

As I burst out of Costorphine Wood in times of rhymes uprising
A little disorientated from that madd’ning mazy hill
Below me, summer farmland, grand in greens & gold unfolding
& the tower down at Ingliston, where from the melting tarmac
Lumber’d a Jumbo Ryan Air, jets grown fat on fangl’d charges
Rising above the vegetation beneath the western skyline
Which Glasgow, Arran, Ireland & America lay beyond
But nearer here, my eyes steer to Queensferry’s famous bridges
Hinting at sea & so toward the sea-shore turn my strollings
Pedalling this smooth slope where plane-spotters hold posh binoculars
By a Polish-looking lady, fraught with worries about her world
Then turn me right down Clermiston Road at the Capital Hotel
To reach a crazy junction of impenetrable car-lanes
Blocking my way, a wild sea-storm heckling an ancient mariner
SCHOLA REGIA EDINBURGNESIS

The most important school in Scotland, & intimately connected with the literature & progress of the kingdom

James Grant

Those claustrophobic cloisters of Scottish academias
That gave the world shrewd scientists & political orators
Now bright & airy classrooms flank’d by playing fields of spaciousness
& hip, young modern teachers not ‘Professor Inky Whiskers’
The latest social move in our education’s evolution
Stamp’d with the royal seal’s approval of this new solution
Being the eighteenth oldest school this planet ever prosper’d
Singing masterful curriculi, before even old Oxford,
& to the native spiritus her role is more than vital –
You can feel it in Scott’s novels or a Fergusson recital
For most attending pupils share a mutual thirst for fame
Based on long centuries of tradition & many-a-famous name
Like Phillip Bent & Harcus Strachan, winners of the school’s VCs
To annual enigmas & their ten A-star GCSEs

CRAMMOND FC

The most romantic city on earth

JM Barrie

As Dante pass’d thro Purgat’ry, the Inferno & Heaven
Commenting upon all he saw, alive in the land of the dead
So too have I been walking, reporting upon things long gone
So it is so very refreshing to see the modern day instead
For beside the spectacle cul-de-sac guarding Davidson’s Mains
Several teams of young footballers flash strips about the pitches
Giving sense of purposefulness to the little lad that trains
Who now receives a long pass & from the corner of his eye
Sees the opposition goalie off his line & thro the rains
Mad with Myrmidon fury lets his rotund javelin fly
& the guts of glory digest the matches delicate equipoise
A golden goal, his father so overjoy’d, he thought he’d cry
Torn by pride & emotion, for this the youngest of his boys
Now smiling in elation to the appreciation & the noise
LAURISTON CASTLE

Who indeed that has once seen Edinburgh, but must see it again in dreams waking or sleeping?

Charlotte Bronte

Set in haar-happy garden grounds over Crammond & the sea
Sat peering deeply into Fife when the mist evaporates
This stately citadel of the logorythmic family
Bequeath’d with all its contents to the nation & all its mates

Within its lush, wall-paper’d rooms the gentile attend lectures
Upon the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, scrapbooks Victorian
The life & works of Miss Jane Austen, elegant Scotch Christmases
The development of rail travel & kitchens Edwardian

Outside, upon the clover’d lawn pepper’d with tender daisies
A roquet kicks the croquet off, groups in keen hoop-hungry pairs
Clockwise & anti-clockwise along imaginary mazes
Sports blanketing embarkations on hopeless, dramatic affairs

& midgets in day-glo jackets pass the summer holiday
Cocklings running round like madmen, Henlings chatting as they play

RUSTICA

S e baile mor Dhun Eideann
A b’ eibhinn lleam bhith ann
A ite fialaidh farsaing
A bha tlachdmhor anns gach ball

Duncan ban Macintyre

Go over the wall at Lauriston & into the sweeping field
That tinkles down to the twinkling Forth & that floating island shield
Climb over the trees to see a world of wheat before Autumn’s yield
A scene of opulence pastoral in its simple gleaming
A stone’s throw from the city dweller’s endless country dreaming

Now passing solitary trees, woodland archipelago
Now pacings drop breathings deepen, the mind becomes verteuex
Whatever music this scene sings I feel ready to receive
Ah! Sportive squirrels gambol as young Adam before Eve!

Now leaving open spaces for the crowds of Amaranthus
T’where leaping hares abounding paths for the safety of the hedges
Far from the crags, climbs & precipices all in a haelan’ chaos
This place still satisfactory to rouse an Amadeus
ALATERVA

History seeps out of every one of Edinburgh’s closes & side streets.  
But the history is not moribund, it is alive.  

Ian Lang

As Septimus the African open’d wide his Jaguar jaws  
From the ashes of Alauna a fresh Roman fort uprose  
To be the main base camp beneath the eagle empire’s Everest  
& a rugged, tough distraction for the spoilt sons of Serverus  
“There will not be any orgies where the rain drenches the sea…  
La pianto uomo nasce piu robusta in Escozia!”

Tho the African gain’d victory over the Picts of vast Fortrenn  
“He’ll never rule all of us!” whisper’d throughout the whole demesne  
Now in his sixties Septimus felt as sick as Hezekiah  
& left ‘defeated’ Scotland to attend to his vast empire  
But died in bitter agony many miles from even Gaul  
& as he breath’d his last the Picts swarm’d ‘cross the Antonine

So legions burnt his fort down, turning south for Lugovallium  
Leaving the ruin of Rome’s dreams like Achilles,’ Illium!

MESOLITHIC CRAMMOND

The latest research on genes show that nearly all persons of British lineage are descended from these Mesolithic peoples.  
Matthew White

Twelve thousand years ago Crammond was swept by a higher sea  
Where on the beach our ancestors eked out a winning existence  
Living embodiments of the migration of intelligence  
“The proof is in the pits of nut-shells!” mutters archaeology  
Paleolithic, Neolithic, whatever they may be  
Flint tools were used, stone arrowheads flew, so they must have had some sense  
More for practical eventualities, not to please futurity

Mankind is older than the dust of lost forgotten cities  
& the monkeys & the dogs & the lizards we all once were  
There is a wondrous common-ness to which all creation must answer  
A pond of ancient memories, you can hear them in the ditties  
Sung by blind bards, & in the Spring when deep down we remember  
Being those plants gasping for life across thirsty, frozen tundra  
Like a baby turning towards the milky breast of his mother!
CRAMOND VILLAGE
A canty neuk where almond joijuns the forth
Ye dauner down the brae
Wi views o fifes green kingdom to the north
Ayont the wee bit bay

Douglas Fraser

Here is not a highland island or a little bay down Devon
But an outpost of Auld Reekie where the rain drenches the sea
Tight to the coast as a Binturong’s prehensile tail grips a tree
Beside the River Almond, where some nautical school reunion
Of yachts & boats bob on the tides, like inside-dogs at windows
Wait for their absent owners to return & take them walkies,
While in the inn assemble real-ale-swilling, badg’d up folkies
& a mother sits breastfeeding her handsome firstborn to a doze

Gone! Gone! Gone is the industry that once made this village thriving
That blast of forge & furnace blazing bright for one wee lifetime
When barrels, hoops, nails, pans, pots, chains, anchors, spades, etcetera
Brought a definitively distinct community together
That, although today sleeps as peacefully as Hektor’s shade
Still clings on to its identity like its museum does a spade.

CRAMMOND ISLAND
But still the seabirds pipe their oorie cries
Ahort the Lothian mud
& still the sunset pents the evening skies
Wi palette maist gane wud
& aye its colours fade afore the een
As gloaming adds its glamerie to the scene

Douglas Fraser

As a cute lass in wellies watches her dog bound along the beach
I stroll across the patchy causeway in the land of sinking waves,
Where plaque-like barnacles slowly decay the fangy dragonsteeth,
A good half-mile of Lindisfarne, to a place of Facebook raves
Where one must muse a myrtle leaf among the Spartan cypresses
& play small-luted melodies on strings criss-crossing our minds
The tang of sea-salt stirring nostrils, & subsequently the soul
No wonder ancient clergymen all forged true deeds of ownership
Until the problem solved by the papal bull of Lucius!

At the summit of this seaweed worm a gun-emplacement lingers
Relique of Britain’s recent hectic past & mrd’ring valkyries
Beneath a few young ravers camping upon this tidal island
I unmine, for my hard-core friends, its present party potential
Perfect shelter for amps & decks when the weather turns torrential
SILVERKNOWLES ESPLANADE

To get the real glamour of Crammond, there must be no trippers about, & you must stand solitary at the cobble ferry, whistling for the drowsy ferryman

Ratcliffe Barnett

All along the Crammond foreshore with her island leaning leftwise I made wander with the cyclists, the sea-gulls & the dogwalkers & felt a certain freedom beneath the soft calm of heaven From this a multitude of thoughts woke at once within me & swam Some rose up with the Cleigh Hills, some fell down to Dalgety Bay Some centr’d on Nereus teaching Galatea of Inchcolm’s coves Some stank upon the detritus of dirty empires in the waters Some on a misty sun, visible thro a mole’s opacous membrane Wading thro dense watery vapours as the mists begin to melt All these & many more like them form mimesis in my mind

Leaving my deep subconscious train I turn to the task at hand For in my deep mid-thirties, as Kasparov touch’d his zenith & Dante felt both mentally & materially ready I am ready to be once more swallow’d up by mine ain Reekie

BRITISH GAS

Hey Damo - Your latest email (I’m guessing your latest sonnets) have crashed my company firewall for reasons of ‘profanity’. Naughty, naughty!!!!

Carol Aitken

A few years ago as I went bumbling all around the Raj I realiz’d my bumbag made me look a bit of a bum-boy & the books shov’d down mi backside in the sun gave me a chafin’ So I got this guy in Delhi to make me a slick, little man-bag With enough room for mi books, mi weed, mi passport & mi money & a little extra space, today I carried a DVD I’d borrow’d it from Yarrow, where the rainbow shone sweetly The fabulous Il Postino, where the poet Pablo Neruda Settl’d upon Salina, I’d almost gone there before Egadi & promis’d to return it soon, with her office on my circuit She left her wide-view’d office at the very top of British Gas To meet me in the car-park, & said “I thought that you would like it!”

Above, that vast leviathan, Xerxes gorging on the grid Profits from half of Scotland’s insatiable lust for power!
ROYSTON HOUSE

As a Mackenzie descendant and a visitor to Scotland and Edinburgh, I would like to state my objection to the current planning for the Edinburgh waterfront development, wherein the access road would cut through the Caroline Park grounds and essentially destroy a shining example of important Scottish history.

Kenneth Skinner

As the juiciest strawberries grow beneath the harshest nettles
Overshadow'd by the cyan gasworks there stands the choicest stately hame
Heart of the famous Caroline Park, peach impervious to envy
That once bequeath'd capital pride to the Dukes of Argyle & Buccleugh
Now swallow'd up by the dullness of modernist interventions
That waterfront development & all its tall, Ikean mansions
Her house all stuff'd with tenants, not one silver platter between 'em
Yet still a lordly jewel as all around its fine courtyard
Hang tapestries from yesteryears thirst for aesthetic illusion
& the doors reek of antiquity that still stirs a true historian
Alas! Thou art a rosebush failing beneath a swarm of nettles!

As I talk with a local about all those protests in the pipeline
Hoping to preserve this jewel for the betterment of mankind
I sense that sinking feeling, pissing against modernity’s wind

GRANTON

Tho many people have cities in them, yet, I believe, this may be said with truth that in no city in the world do so many people live in so little room as at Edinburgh

Daniel Defoe

As I pass a lampless lighthouse under agitated seagulls
A host of seaside industries shelter from the buffeting winds
& ‘forty pee for a cup of tea’ reminds me I am thirsty

Beside the silent harbour where the blue-white boats are bobbing
The ghost of fisher past sits smoking his thick, coarse pipe tobacco
In huge-cuff’d, dog-ear’d jackets with a greasy coat in complement
Reading a nude paperback that he hides upstairs from her indoors

He makes his way to Wardie Square, some Brookside close or Corrie
Built by the good Dukes of Buccleugh, colonizing honest workers
More room to eat & sleep & couch than a slum itinerant
Today, amorphous suburban bundles mazey to Ferry Road

After a fight he storms out for a beer at the Old ChainPier
Where Betty Moss lowers her bamboo glasses as he walks in
Hoping him a green-gill’d yankee matelot, frisky & filthy rich!
NEWHAVEN

Halfway out were steps from which men, & in those days only men, could bathe. They left their clothes in heaps & to my admiration swam out of their depths. Some had quick dips even in January

Elaine May Wilson

As Queen’s Park plays its footba’ beneath the roar-less stands of Hampden
A little harbour – Norvus Portus – snoozes by the Leither quays
Where once, two hundred vessels fill’d their sails in search of mackerel
Now only one, the Carrie B, still plys the Forth commercially
The rest are leisure boats own’d in a catchment of twenty miles
Whose Rolls Royce engines swallow fuel at about a pound a mile
& another two hundred per year spent here to secure a berth
But then ye’ll feel a pearl in this, the oyster of the oceans
Like salty Brian McDermaid of the British Merchant Navy
Who’d join’d up, not for money, but to broaden his horizons
“& the girls!” he says a-gigging as we share golden Virginia
Sat on his little boat upon the level of shimmering waters
Who points me to the Stone Pier Inn, where neatly hung upon the walls Are photographs of sailors past & the Zulu Class tall-masted!

LEITH

Ancient town of Leith, most wonderful to be seen,
With your many handsome buildings, and lovely links so green,
As for the docks, they are magnificent to see
They comprise five docks, two piers, 1,141 yards long respectively

William McGonnagal
THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF LEITH

It is a large & populous town, or two towns, for the river or harbour parts them, & they are joined by a good stone bridge, about half a mile or more, from the mouth of the river

Daniel Defoe

I don’t need my passport today
But I would have done once
When Edinburghers were practically English
& this port was self-governing
Bless’d by the Bruce himself
Reinvesting vast revenues into civic pride
& less than a hundred years ago
Said a stark NO in referendum
To merging with them on the hill
For this windy hotbed of Trade Union
Thought the sun shone just for them
Whenever it bother’d to glint thro the clouds
But one day, seeing sense, took Reekie for a mate
& gave the city its sweaty masculinity

HARBOURSIDE

A walk on a Sunday…
Roon the docks it must be!
Grain shisp an’ coal ships;
New ships an’ auld ships;
Fresh pentit, rustit ships;
Back frae the sea

Jim Blaikie

By the rather soulless Ocean Terminal
& the Royal Yacht Britannia I recline
Hammer-clank, engines grunt & grumble
Cranes crowd the quayside opposite

Life blood o sunny Leith’s thriving corporations
Bakers, brewers, mariners, coopers & shopkeepers
Once goodly ships laden with precious merchandize
Sail’d to & fro from ports both near & far

Oysters to London, carriages to Paris
Herrings to Poland, books to America
& criminals, never to see their bonnie land again
Bound, heavy-hearted, for John Hunter’s Australia

& in my mind’s eye, swamp’d by escorting vessels
The Royal George carrying his Highness to the Shore
SUNSHINE ON LEITH

What it was was a tune that I had for about six months. I couldn't get the words and then one day, when we were recording 'Letter from America', we were coming back over the Firth of Forth in the plane, and I looked down on the sunshine on Leith...and I got it, and I just knew it.

Craig Reid

LEITH RACES

When cappucinoing outside the Malmaison
Try & imagine the Seaman’s Mission
Before the yuppiefication of Leith

It would eventually become a modern dosshouse
For prostitutes & the idle unwash'd
Or bespectacld twins bashing songs out on guitar

When Letter From America hit The Tube
& they would write the Hibee’s emotive anthem
Flying over the docks one sunny day

& when Jambos tried to dismantle their club
Like Isocrates, Elias, Enoch & the Zulus
They chain themselves to the Bank of Scotland railings

For footba' is not just about balance books
& victories not won just on the field!

Robert Fergusson

Beyond these blockading buildings
The once sandy East Sands consumed by concrete
Where, every year, at the end of July
The city flooded down to the gala

Twyx Wyly wight at rowly powl
An flingin’ at the dice
Folk look’d at lists of noblemen & horses
Gauging weight & height & grist

Then, with a whistle, off the horse-hoof pounds
You could hear them thudding at the foot o the walk
Claps & curses, plates & purses
& a hearse for the unlucky jocks

Then, in the drinking booths were winnings spent
Til fights finish’d off the entertainment
I dislike anything in Scotland that is not purely national &
characteristic

George IV

When you think of Scotland, what do you think?
The kilt’s probably gonna be quite high up there
But not every Scotsman’s a pantsless highlander
A German Prince presumed they all were, however
So Sir Walter pander’d to this regal illusion

As the royal foot landed upon Scotia’s soil
With Arthur’s Seat a firework Vesuvious
There was enacted a collective hallucination
Everybody dress’d up to the nines for His Highness
& enthusiasm on the verge of hysteria

But the King wasn’t toasted with whiskey in the inns
It was all French claret, & drank by the gallon
& even the three-legged highland haggis
Was invented by a lady down York.

Mary Moriarty

Swamp’d in a sea of impedimenta
Scuzzily creative
All classes of late-night characters converge
For what can only be call’d an UBER-RAVE
All watch’d over by the diligent eye
Of the indisputable Queen o’ Leith

What magic myst’ries in her mistress eyes
Puzzlingly elated
Still sumptuous in style, Leith’s Lady Ga-Ga,
Like a mixture of the new Leith & the Old
Better than Betty Moss & Bet Lynch put together
& a lady to be serv’d by

Pamplona to Napoli, Galway & Colne
It’s definitely the maddest pub I’ve supp’d in
ROCK STEADY

I have seen a good deal of human life in Edinburgh, a great many characters which are new, to one bred up in the shades of life that I have been

Rabbie Burns

O! Quoi passé ma jeunesse!
But then again I’ll never work again
Work is for workers, poetry for poets
For example, I got sack’d for once absconding
From Old Trafford before an REM gig
I’d rode down with Mark Hamilton’s posse
Growing fat on the profits of Hillsborough

They’d noticed I’d gone, & on my return
Call’d me to account down Queen Charlotte Street
So I cook’d ‘em a hotpot – mi gran’s special recipe
& said, ‘she’d rang me up as we hit Manchester
Where news of her fresh hotpot hit me like a bomb
& if they’d try some they’d know why I just had to go
But mindlessly sack’d me without even tasting it!

SEIGE OF LEITH

In shot of leeth, within Lastaricke than
We picht our campe, where canons cabins brake
And oft by chaunce, it kild a horse or man,
But no man would the campe therefore forsake:
Sutch tennis balles did kepe our men awake
And quicken those that were dul sprighted soules
And made some laddes to digge them depe in holes

Thomas Churchyard

As one saunters along Constitution Street
Notice the walls of South Leith Parish Church
Last remnents of the ball-batter’d bastion
That for twelve years kept Leith a little Lille
When flint & steel
Rang constantly in Holy War
Will Scotland pay the Peter-Pence?
Or keep it for its own?

The Auld Alliance toss’d on its head
As many an English soldier of fortune
Ycamp’d about this ‘island of perfume’
Join’d Scottish siblings in their sommey charge
Until, as Zeus grew bored of all things Trojan,
Jove tired of wars & sent the French back home
LEITH FM

Aiming to strengthen the community spirit and identity of Leith

Website

Above the Leith Docker’s Social Club & all their tales of the old days
The voice of the Republic beams daily 98.8 FM
Just tune in & be entertain’d & as no two Tigers stripe the same & each first folio different
Community Radio’s eclectic cauldron Is the true chord of the People;

Andy Chung & Blueflint’s sun-drench’d vocals
Stevie Stix’s audio globetrotting
Gaoussou Koita’s sermons from West Africa
Colin Barr’s Rat-Pack, Cliff Perry’s dodgy reggae & anybody else if you wanna get involv’d

IRVINE WELSH

I chose not to choose life. I chose somethin’ else. And the reasons? There are no reasons. Who needs reasons when you’ve got heroin?

Mark ‘Rent-boy’ Renton

As Hebden Bridge is the heart of English Sapphos So Leith seems to be the capital of Scottish Baldies & one in particular who once dwelt here On Wellington Place, typewriting to the trees, Mirroring the murky madness of Muirhouse & nam’d his baby Trainspotting – at first Critical circles seem’d very uneasy With colloquial slang & the glamour of skag But, just like the living hell of Holly Greig, It all exists!

As bards from sublime pulpits sculpt their lines He gave the world his real-life anti-opera Ecstasy, Filth, Glue, Porno
Far from the misty vision of King George...
LEITH LINKS

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<td>Lost at golf with Pitaro and</td>
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<td>Sir James Foulis</td>
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This is the city’s other lung;
As Duddingston made Curling
The regal game of gowff first play’d
Upon this level greenery
That ‘Fam’d field on Forth’s sounding shore’
Where little balls blast far & sure
Across the grass, where massive crowds
Watch’d on & drank & gambl’d
Til the honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers
Who’d defin’d the laws that still tame Tiger Woods
Dodder’d off to tranquil Muirfield

Today, young Leithers pass & bowl, wee pramlings
Are push’d thro open spaces, while gadgies neck
Their Tennants, as lone golfers practice hopeless drives...

THE WALKWAY

Robert Burns was coming up Leith walk brandishing a sapling & with much violence in his grace & manner. When asked what was the matter, Burns replied, I am going to smash that shite, Creech

John Grierson

Come join me for a walk along the links
As in this line it s p a c i o u s n e s s e x t e n d s
Paving a pleasant pathway through one’s thinking…
Once at the top bear right down peaceful Pirniefield
Leftwise pass by silent tree-barrows & rose tombs
All thro a pretty wee scheme, to pass thro a wall
To reach a path where once the railways ran
& turning right lets follow, hopefully alone
Admiring the greenfingery of local allotmenteers
Then iron-bolted Brandon bridges eke back the age of steam
Til a squeal of pain on Astroturf jolts me to the moment
I’m gliding the gentle slope to Easter Road

Then, chicaning down Throntree, Halmyre & Lorne
We reach the ceaseless sleeplessness of Leith’s peerless walk
PILRIG HOUSE

A pleasant gabled house set by the walkside among some brave young woods

David Balfour

Springfield was once a field in Spring
As was all the land twyx Reekie & Leith
Dozing Sylvanian
Pin-pricked with noble houses

Edinburgh’s ain Amityville
Seems to be sulking
Half-hidden like a robber’s den
& like the hungry Amur Leopard
Deforested

But if you see it once or twice
Then close your eyes
You can always bring it back to your mind’s eye
As Robert Louis Stevenson did often
Relaxing on a hot beach in Tahiti

THE LEITH TERRITORIALS

I ran up Leith Walk trying to follow it, but the street was mobbed by people and soldiers lining the route. I eventually found myself down at the cemetery gates sitting there. I really didn’t appreciate the sadness of it all being the age I was

Mary Stewart

In a corner of Rosebank cemetery
One reads names on the brail memorial
Two hundred & ten strong
Who’d met their fates, not on Flander’s fields
But before they’d even left their country
Then died for their country
They had all set off from Leith Central
Enthusiastically serving the Empire
To a flurry of flying hats
Until, close to Quintinshill, not far from Gretna Green
Carriages flung into the air like flurrying flying hats
“BRITAINS WORST EVER TRAIN DISASTER!”
Sold the venders
Soon every house in Leith was wearing black
WATER OF LEITH

Probably the most beautiful city we have ever seen

The Black Eyed Peas

SAINT BERNARD’S FC

From the small glance he had of the crowd he put them down as a decided high class set

Scottish sport reporter 1887

There once was a time when footba’ was young
Both Hibs & the Hearts unhappy to find
Attach’d to their catchment & snatching their fans
The soccer of Stockbridge was mocking their style & beating the best round Britain they play’d
Where fans of Man U did stand & applaud
As did the Arsenal & Glasgie’s top sides
So up for the cup they ripp’d thro the ties
To battle Tynecastle & settle old scores
Betwyx Reekies teams victory suspends
Til free kick terrific sickens the Jambos
Then off to the final go fans in their droves
All flocking to Ibrox where rocks the main stand
As Renton are beaten two-won & the cup!
FREDERICK CHOPIN

The infinite delicacy and finish of his playing, combined with great occasional energy never overdone

The Scotsman

In Warriston’s world the wise were awaiting
Crevatte, connoisseur claret & cocaine

The sweet soul of Poland stroll’d into the hall
To sing his life’s swansong so sublimely sung

Miss Stirling & sister insisted he sing it
Tho dying & drain’d he dared not dissent

As art is immortal as tenors touch Titan
Like Balius, Xanthus Achilles’s horses

He sings with his fingers & brings music winging
From aeriel carelessness all sharing his flair

Impromptu, mazurkas sonatas & nocturnes
They rose in applause well of course, he was awesome

His flavour they savour’d forever unwaver’d
Those notes still afloat in emotional throats

BOTANICAL GARDENS

As Scotsmen always take pride in their heathers, it is fitting that there should be a good show of them in the botanic garden

Chiang Yee

The gentle sciences, Elysium’s source,
This season sees the Century Plant
Deliver agave, then shrivel to stump

From Texas to Mexico they sexlessly sleep
For the span of a man’s life, & longer can live
Then flower fragrantly before they must die

Delicate rosettes all petalling yellow
Push up thro panes - Parisian tower -
Full twenty foot flung, suffimigating

Tequila’s cousin deem’d Queen For a Day’
Silence interalian senses her doom
A brief glory-brush in beauty outstanding

While Orchids & Cycads all cried as she died
The Ferns & the Flora all offer’d grave grievance
AUNG SAN SUU KYI

There is no habitation of human beings in this world so fine in its way... as this, the capital of Scotland

Andrew Carnegie

As Sean Connery, Johnson, Monty & the Queen
All offer’d this fair city’s freedom
So she has been too, but cannot accept it
Being many miles from Embro... Myanmar madness!

Suppression, oppression, gross violation
Her democratic dream done in by that regime
The voters supported her... the tortures start
She’s arrested, bested, will tested to her uppermost
Held captive in her house in an unhappy holiday

Now envying views over Inverleith Pond
The thunder of hundreds of runners astound
In the name of her fame, & the shame of juntas
No country of conscience, not caring at all

O, to swim with swans, or dance with a stranger
She thinks, clinking coffee cups in her greying sink

THE GRANGE

Cricket in Scotland is very old, 225 years to be precise.

Daniel Smith

The Pavilion pews  greet sportsmen apparell’d
Crowd clapping politely  for cricketers fam’d
Like Bradman, that maddening  lad in the saddle
Impervious Sir Vivian  delivery tall
& Gracie, whose spaciousness  sprays wide the ball

Meanwhile vintage Dyvours  plays its advantages
Tin temple of tennis’s  traditional home
Well before Wimbledon  they work’d out the wonder
Of rackets & jackets  & whacking the ball
Ubiquitous Sphairistike’s  antiquitous home

Twyx cricket & court  squash & hockey competing,
Completing the seat  of this heartbeat of sport
Whose graciousness places  this space a Pireas
With suitable views  of this beautiful toon
GLEONGLE PARK

A city so beautiful it breaks the heart again and again
Alexander McCall Smith

Over the white wall, by the wild woodland
Up the Arboretum, rear doon the Rocheid
Raring for release the river runs rightwise
Bridge it to Bell Place all cobbl’d & brown
Here houses all huddl’d & hoary & happy
Upstairs & downstairs in space-sharing pairs

Castles call’d Colonies, Kemp, Collins, C??
Masons & artisans, sandstone & tiles
Deaf & dumb bound down dummy steps to Dunrobin
For limping Ladelaws liquor & liquorice
Fundraising, functions, unfilthing Leith Water
Community spirits all glistening gold

Last year this swimming pool saved for posterity
The calm up in arms til made harmless alarm

STOCKBRIDGE

The capital of Scotland is filled with strongly individual individuals
Moray Maclaren

When standing in Stockbridge the city staccato
Seems quietly distant, these streets of high quality
Tho flummox’d by traffic from Ferry Road’s throughfare
Still blest with a presence of sensible shoes
& top, happy shops stopping day-hoppers
& ladies of leisure alluring luxurious
& jolly old gentlemen & joggers in jewels

This road honours Raeburn, that rarest of residents
Who set self-styl’d standards, the first Stockaree
That prime portrait painter who polish’d off pieces
Talented Battoni had taught him in Italy
Who furnish’d us faces of fine, famous Scot’s folk
& set strict conditions for towering terraces
In grandiose gardens midst gardens so grand
JESSIE KING

Edinburgh is an experience. A city of enormous gifts Whose streets sing of history Whose cobbles tell tales

Alan Bold

Darkling the demon, Phobetor, Phantasus, Three babies abandon’d she bought for a buck But quickly their sicknesses quicken’d her fickleness So turn’d her to murder to still the sad sound That rang in her anger, she strangles them dangling & hanging from Heaven til hoary namore Then wrapp’d up in paper & placed in wild spaces For dogs to devour them or foxes to feast

At last her vile past upturn’d in a parcel That traced her to Cheyne Street, ingraining insane Her crimes struck a chord thro the kitchens of Stockbridge Unanimous clamours, "The noose must be used!" That left them a legacy the locals still talk about When innocence died, instance infanticide

ANN STREET

The best thing is the peace and the fact we have these small gardens. We have foxes and birds, but apart from that it's very silent. It's a lovely community.

Dilly Emslie

O wealth Karlsfinian, O pride Carthaginian That vision of Raeburn, his mission to make home Midst fellow high-fliers with rich-filling coffers Dona Jimena Diaz, the lodger De Quincey A quality street by Queen Mother acclaim’d; Exclusive, expensive, elusive advantages Two gardens to tend to, a postcode of gold But built before parking & permits & penpushers The mad, modern nightmare the New Town now knows!

As bright lunar lamps light the gates day & nightly Contented, this classical address widely crav’d With wings like a mansion well over a million Or more for the glory of lordlier life All named after Raeburn’s amazing young wife
DANUBE STREET

There was not a dog-collar in sight when we turned the corner from St Bernard’s crescent into the most notorious street in Edinburgh

Ian MacWhirter

Sexual 17
Madame Dora Joyce
House of harlots
Punters & c***s
Smut adolescent
Queuing Americans
Priests & pricelists
Stain’d reputations
Leisure & pleasure
Festival full

Since flippant hippies
Swinging’s the things
Internet fetishes
Our lust now allow’d

MINERAL WELL

Edinburgh is a paradox. A classical town rescued from the frigid & a gothic town rescued from the grotesque

James Buchan

Our famous friar clad in Christ’s skin
Seeking support from local lords
To move the Moors from Jesus’ jail
Cane to this stream quite weak & wan
By a singing spring Hygeia heals
Tis Britain’s best a wondrous well
Tho tasting strange tall by the tres
A temple tow’rs Tivoli tall
A penny cup to cure or complain
Soon pilgrims place the faith in....
This sacred place soon full of .....

Superstition, placebo real?
We humans hope for hidden help
Forbidden from gnosis gone!
DEAN VILLAGE

But from the bridge I lean & look
Going & coming, late & soon
& thank god for this flowery nook

Henry Johnstone

Gushing to the rushes
Of swift, foaming waters
Atop Teutonic toy-town
Thomas Telford stood entranced
Where bakers once baked bread
His Breadalbanian bridge
Bounded abundant
& his artistic scaffold
Removing, revealing
World-work to worship,
Soon new suicidals
Lived slightly longer!

Friends, pose by these pillars
While we wonder awhile!

DEAN CEMETARY

O wad this braw hie-heipit toun
Sail aff like an enchanted ship,
Drift owre the world’s seas up & doun,
& kiss wi’ Venice lip to lip

Lewis Spence

A garden of graves
Most noble tombstones;

Obelisks & crosses
Generals & judges
Surgeons & socialites
Erskine & Cockburn
Jeffrey, John Irving...

No North West Passage
Winter beset them
All the oars frozen
& all Franklin’s fault

Across the Atlantic
His body brought home
To lie with these legends
EDUARDO PAOLIZZI

The full flood of a social, political & cultural renaissance
which might tempt some to regard Athens as ‘the Edinburgh
of the south

Ralph Lownie

The Dean Gallery Dali, the Leith Leonardo
His studio supplanted – plaster casts, pictures
The mind of a madman, materials muddl’d
But noticing neatness one comes to his clarity
That graciously gifted his nation his name
& presents to his peers & their future families
A lifetime of living, the arts of his heart
& hoping to house it in suitable surroundings
Like Bates bought Chelsea for one poxy pound
The council acquired John Watson’s College
Where, green by the gates, his nuclear Newton
Invites us inside us to the seas of our souls
For absence of art sends us all to the sewers
To run with the rats in the dank & the dark

PRINCES STREET

The spectacle of the old town, seen from the new, is inspiring
& splendid, & places Edinburgh, from the artistic point of
view, on a level with Constantinople & Stockholm

John Ruskin
DONALDSON’S COLLEGE

What a wonderful city Edinburgh is!
What alternation of height and depth!
Samuel Taylor Coleridge

As Goddesses made love with earthly heroes
& left offspring immortal to the world
Come wonder at this house of hybrid structure
The Fatehpur Sikri of this hemisphere
At Playfair’s epic peak design’d in raptures
Capturing well the beneficiary age
When men grown rich on their workers poverty
Moulded by sermons & frequent church going
Nearing their ends they pique towards repentance
A far cry from modernity’s selfishness
& as the charitable need charity
Donaldson loves the deaf children of Scotland
& gives them a palace, the Queen grew jealous,
“Far grander, she grumbl’d, “Than most of my own!”

COLOUR SOUND STUDIOS

With not a note out of place or a lazy lyric in sight, Notes & Rhymes is considerably more than its modestly throwaway title might imply

Michael Quinn

Well, I’ve got mi own band & I’m a singer
Saraswathi’s psychedelic syllables!

& when we need to practice as a full band
Hit this wee nook & cranny off Haymarket

With free tea & coffee at eight pounds an hour
& an album for a ton done in a day

You record it in the Proclaimer’s HQ
Where they did all the demos for Notes & Rhymes

Then tour’d it for fifty thousand pounds a gig
Round America, Australia & home

I know the boss, Bobby, he’s a right cool kid
& I’ve partied with the fellow time-to-time

Who coax’d us thro an epic day’s recording
You’ll find free to listen to on Damo-Tunes
CREATIVE SCOTLAND

Encourage and sustain artists and creators of all kinds

Creative Scotland

Most of us have play’d the National Lottery
At some point in our lives, so we’ve all paid for
Ballerinas, movie shoots & pottery

As our love of gambling hurls funds thro the door
Of Art’s Councils, who filter it out again
Like an effervescent renaissance of yore

Well, the lucky few deserve it in the main
But now the strange Con-Lib, ‘Brokeback Alliance’
Starts suckling upon Labour’s progressive vein

& slowly pulls plugs on Art’s state reliance
Those lucky few getting fewer by the day
Crush’d by the empires of Money & Science

But who are they to say that art doesn’t pay
When a poet wants to work he’ll write a play

THOMAS DE QUINCEY

In the street where people preen like princes
Edinburgh lays itself open like a secret solved

Alan Bold

Amidst old Saint Cuthbert’s ever fading graves
Upon holy ground of thirteen hundred years
A sad griever saw his wife slip neath grass waves
Then slunk off to find something to ease his tears

He was a friend of Scott, & once resided
Beside Grassmere in Wordsworthian retreat
But now, like Coleridge, he was derided
& daily, by his debtors, chas’d street-to-street

For like a one-word poem, OPIUM
Swam thro his essence, twelve thousand drops a day
From a promisingly brilliant spectrum
His scintillance now several shades of grey!

Til at last, when from his gremlins found release
He lay above his wife in eternal peace
PRINCES STREET GARDENS

Princes Street West End Garden is fascinating to be seen,
With its beautiful big trees & shrubberies green
& its magnificent water fountain in the valley below
Helps to drive away from the tourist all care & woe

William McGonnagal

Let us pause awhile from all our constant motion
Upon the lushy grass beside the Bandstand
By vibrant colours in their cadellian beds
& a young couple stroking each others heads
& some lady writing a letter by hand

Come let us contemplate all life’s emotions
For here was once submerg’d by gentle waters
A man-made bastion they named Nor Loch
With Reekie’s rock glowering like a warlock
As wretched mothers drown’d unwanted daughters

Now we can settle beneath these shady boughs
Free from the wars caus’d by feuding religions
Watch maidens tingle ‘neath their lovers’ vows
& little infants pestering the pigeons

DAVID HULME

In just 50 years Edinburgh had more impact on our ideas
than any town of its size since the Athens of Socrates.

James Buchan

In the firmament of the enlightenment
He was a Jupiter, his thoughts gigantic
& one tipsy night ‘cross the Nor Loch he went
But slipp’d into the murk, where splashing frantic
He call’d for aid, at last a fishwife heard him
“Tis Mister Hulme, the atheist!” things look’d grim…

“Religion says be good to thine enemy!”
Fluster’d the philosoph while sinking lower,
Then the Fish-Wife hiss’d in turn, “That well may be,
But until you can recite the Lord’s Prayer
& become a Christian, I’ll dae ye wrong!”
How fast the words, “Our Father…” fell from his tongue

Thus when to rhyme & reason he relented
She rescued him the second he repented!
EDINBURGH

Your great London, as compared to Dun-Edin, mine ‘own romantic town’, is as prose compared to poetry, or as a great, rambling heavy epic compared to a lyric, brief, bright, clear, & vital as a flash of lightning

**Charlotte Bronte**

I mounted a horse twyx the Old Town & New Steel-sinew’d Scots Grey, the pride of Waterloo
With city ambisonic, while oor tourists trail
Along the castle’s classical crag-topp’d tail
Who gaze upon each creamy colour’d pattern
Concentric, like those awesome rings of Saturn
Forming the streets of Edinburgh’s fated pale

Tho’ year-by-year Auld Reekie’s creaking older
Like hardy Turritopsis Nutricula
She reinvents herself each generation
Some madame in the brothel of her nation
& with cosmetic assistance in concrete
She nets a new knee-cap, removes her crow’s feet
& opens up her heart to celebration!

G8

I think it is absolutely critical that any demonstration is peaceful and respectful

**Jack McConnell**

They came to celebrate as if it New Year
With Princes Street filling with thousands of folk
Some were radicals, some came just for the smoke
Most just wanted poverty to disappear
Then the protestors good moods morph’d into fear
As the heavy handed police began to walk
The Scottish SA, where civilised would talk
They penn’d us in an animal atmosphere

Twas at this point my memories turn’d to Rome
A year before, marching with a million
Win fun & flowers, a new San Francisco

But if you take Great Britain for a home
You could find yourself toothless to a truncheon
Or dead, & your blue murderers soon let go
ROYAL SCOTTISH ACADEMY

A speculator wanted to build along the south side of Princes Street & the indignant citizens, determined to preserve their views, had to take their case to the House of Lords before the project was stopped.

Fodor’s Exploring Scotland

As our need for joy is learn’d in sorrow’s school & our thirst for art in television’s waste
So rose up Princes Street’s grand facing jewel
Built to appease Reekie’s academic taste
Upon whose walls new paintings politely placed
Like shards of poetry on Aegean shores
Wash’d up by tides of history in strange haste
To remind us there is more to life than wars & New Worlds await us behind open doors…

When we wander thro these panoplies of art
Sensing present sapience of no small part
We find ourselves inspired as did Paolizzi
When for the first time he’d stepp’d inside to see -
Like young Keats he’d felt a Homer in his heart

SCOTTISH NATIONAL GALLERY

During his stay at Edinburgh, after his return from the Hebrides, he was at great pains to obtain information concerning Scotland.

James Boswell (about Samuel Johnson)

Soul drawn by the knowledge I could find that Claude & Apollo & our Muses by the ford
Thro images delicious as fresh truffles -
Like pictures of The Christ & his kerfuffles -
I join’d my fellow acolytes of culture
Circling the paintings as a starving vulture
Waiting for something, some flash to catch the eye
A Titians, a Reubens, a … my oh my!
Her face! So fair & accurate… & that horse
Silly me! It is an Aelbert Cuyp of course!

& native down the stairs McTaggert’s Kintyre
With Sir Joseph Noel Paton’s faerie fire
& Raeburn’s David Hunter’s country attire
Form the proof that Scotia, too, can artist sire
THE LAST MINSTREL

A sculptured growp, classical & symbolic
Staunds by the path, maist beautiful to see

Robert Garrioch

As long as Scot walks the earth, then so shall he
Whose gothic rocket points to infinity,
& carv’d from Carrarn marble, hair cut & dried
His loyal wee deerhound, Maida, by his side
Having shook Rab’s hand when he was just sixteen
The baton pass’d & very soon that awkward teen
Would turn into literary dynamite
& man’s first modern novel sit down & write
Which led to ducal rank & a garter’d knee
But still the lad began in wanton poesy
Tis time – I think – to skim thro his Waverly

While watching trains leaving the station he nam’d
I read on his lap, by these four pillars fram’d
Then doff my flat cap to his genius fam’d

PIOBAIREACHD

There was the Piper Campbell, who played his pipes at the foot of Hanover Street. He rode about in a little carriage, like a modern preambulatir, drawn by two large dogs

D.A. Small

Upon the corner of Princes Street & the Mound
One can always hear the wild, skirling sound
Of Scotland, as it has risen from the glen
Into the heart’s strings, & out thro poet’s pen
When alone, serene, beyond all love & hate
He calls the dying highlanders from their fate
To see, once more, all the glory of the hills
To hear the torrents drone, the rush of the rills,
Alas, all this is a masculine affair
The Royal Society still will not share
Their monopoly with the female pibrochs…
Then bagpipes extensions must be of their cocks!

Tho’ women have the vote, the verve, the vision
They still must face traditional derision!
SUFFRAGETTES

‘Whu’s aa thae fflagpoles ffur in Princes Street?
Chwoich! Ptt! Hechyuch! – Ab-boannie cairry on

Robert Garrioich

As Copenhagen look’d down on his sisters
He let weep an invisible tear of pride

Flora Drummond led the march on a charger
Not side-saddle, but she rode it like a man
“Whatever a man does so a woman can
& will do!” – wee Bessie Watson gave a cheer
(She’d get the pill & the vote in her lifetime)
How many more thousands puff’d this procession
All down pack’d Princes Street, then onto London
A bannerette forest - white, purple & green -

A few years before the men march’d off to Flanders
Leaving voids only the fairer sex could fill
In those songs of Spartan woman – what a thrill –
You could sense in the air the world was changing

EDINBURGHERS

A city forms the folk conceived there
& we see the Edinburghers pass

Alan Bold

As I wander’d midst the shoppers of Saint James
A stranger in the heart of Embro’s maelstrom
I’m energized by my fellow citizens
The jeune goinfre & the boozy ouvrier
The model-wannabe’s immaculate hair
The family man, the honest pensioner
The lesbian couple & the shoplifter,
The Indian children, the TV grandee
& the noisy pack of teenagers dress’d the same -
There’s many more, too many for a sonnet
But all of these, if I’d only approach them
Would offer me a Royal Reekie Welcome
With open arms, so lib’ral are these people
I’m glad to share the air of this city’s pride
Were the lough filled up, as it might easily be, the city might have been extended upon the plain below, & fine beautiful streets would, no doubt, have been built there

Daniel Defoe

RAN-DAN-DAN

Frae joyous tavern, reeling drunk
Wi fiery phizz & een half sunk

Robert Fergusson

Auld Reekie’s wicked when ya reekin’
The Bongo Club’s a buzz when ya peakin’
But if it’s traditional fare ya seekin’
Try the Royal Oak or Sandy Bells
But if folk music aint ya thing
The Caves are full of sing-a-ling
Pivo’s jumpin’ & just as free
& the Jazz Bar, defin-ate-ly
Til chuckin-oot at three!
When we go to York Place Casino
Keeping well fed & water’d til six -
When the world’s wakin’ on weetabix -
Hit Priscillas for gay karaoke
With a Raver, the Radge & a Folkie
We are all naked pebbles on the shores of time
  Waiting to be dragg’d under

Some, however, much larger than the others
  & take more time

Soon men like Raeburn walking along life’s beaches
  Thought he’d record some

&, when pen & paper fail to express fully
  One turns aesthetic

Soon Scotia has the faces of her races cream
  Freshly forever

& thro the generosity of John Ritchie Finlay
  Hang all together

& of course, there’s a few spaces o the walls
  For future family members
SAINT ANDREW’S SQUARE

I am aware of no streets, which, in simplicity & manliness of style, or general breadth & brightness of effect, equal those of the new town in Edinburgh

   John Ruskin

Astride the New Town’s eastern end
Ye’ll find a famous square
Of fresh & trendy coffee blends
& village green to share

Two women convene chest-to-chest
Madonnas in the eye
Whil disint’restd gooseb’ry guest
Checks out the passers by

Th’Adolescent of Selinus
Sits here in modern guise
For Ronald Rae’s stone lion’s gaze
Beams Scotland from his eyes

Then three boys of Ayrshire, fresh from the Dam
Pass on a spliff, which hits me with a wham-bam-blam!

NEUVO CITTA

In Craig’s original plan the area was meant to be entirely residential. He designated today’s Thistle & Rose streets, lesser byways between the grand thoroughfares, as the abode & business place of Tradesmen & shopkeepers. The use of the lanes behind Thistle & Rose streets to reach the back doors of the wealthier residents was a clever element is his deceptively simple plan

   Fodor’s Exploring Scotland

It was definitely the time
To create a more sublime
Architectural arena
Older than America
One half-mile wide

Plushy porticos & domes
Picturesque, palladian homes
Spread from this classical core
Gallantly, towards the shore,
In stately glide

Friends, let thy feet
Step where the gods reside
& let us roam inside
Tall, street to street
HENDERSON’S GALLERY

….in fair Dunedin’s city
Scotland’s taste is quite delightful
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

They’re good guys here
& talk to you
Even if you’re too poor to buy
As beer to beer
From coup to coup
Them cutting edge supply

The Stone Roses!
More than a band
‘But there’s more to life than music!’
Squires supposes
Sharp knife in hand
Turns lino geometric

Making silent music in his workshop
   For three & a half thousand a pop

ASSEMBLY ROOMS

I never have forgotten, & I can never forget that I have the honour to be a burgess, guild-brother of the corporation of Edinburgh
Charles Dickens

Beneath those seven crystal chandaliers
A long line of literature’s leading lights
Have form’d a toast across the loss of years
Of man & pen
    Charles Dickens slow recites
His Christmas Carol to a crowd enthralled
    While puritanic minister appal’d

At last Scott has foregathered with his foes
“The wand is broken & the book buried!”
Admitting formally to smiling peers
Waverly his,
    All day Hogg had hurried
Fifty miles to toast Burns on his birthday
From Selkirk & Ettrick & walking all the way
SHELLEY

From George Street, which crowns the ridge, the eye is led down
sweping streets of stately architecture to the villas & woods that fill
the lower ground, & fringe the shore... & farther away still, just
distinguishable on the paler sky, the crest of some distant peak,
carrying the imagination into the illimatable world

Alexander Smith

As Doctor Frankenstein pass’d thro
This city, ever briefly,
A poet & his young wife blew
Into the streets of Reekie
Where lightning swift their young minds flew
Thro life’s futurity
In England she’d been too young to propose
But Scotland had Coldstream’s differing laws!

As each morning he stepp’d out
He remov’d more of his doubt
To write poetry
For here the nine sisters
Haunt unrivall’d vistas
Of castle & sea!

ROSE STREET

The Café Royal & Abbotsford
Are fill’d wi’orra folk
Whaes stock-in-trade’s the scrievit word
Or twicet-scrievet joke

Robert Garrioch

This is, perhaps, Embro’s most unsung street
From the Abbotsford’s wild-west island bar
To the Milne where Macdairmid meets Maclean,
Sydney Goodsir-Smith pops in for a jar
Round slopp’d tables of eastern smoke & tar
Soon Billy Connolly & Robbie Coltrane
Both liking local drams, whenever they are
In Reekie on business, from the Brewers tit-bits
Thro Robertson’s rugby, are soon off their tits!

A seller of the Big Issue
Shouts from Fred’ricks edges
A drunken hen-do up from Crewe
Sahres potato wedges
While blokes outside the Gordon Arms smoke Benson &
Hedges
ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL

Edinburgh is the perfect place for a civilised existence

Laura Fiorentini

As a boy he loved art & poetry
& music, O! & how he loved to hear
Those sounds, & mastering ventriloquy
Knew exactly what he’d do with his career;
& soon, from ear-to-ear, suspends
The cracklings of a distant farter
Invisible men
Friends speak to friends
Quantum mutata
Si’then

If he knew his little invention
Would one day the world unite
In a single, split-split second,
He would smile, I think, & write

EDINBURGH BOOK FESTIVAL

The largest public celebration of books in the world
Festival Website

Spread beneath the Consort
Rose this reader’s resort
At the heart of Charlotte Square
Above Allan’s Parks
Those Corinthian arks
All serene as on they stare
At B-list writers bumbling everywhere
While their lectures lace the air
& of course, there’s the wine
& the “Darling!” ”Divine!”
With the best of the Fringe over there’

What goes up must come down
As the writers leave town
They’ll be back like an annual fair!
...aa
Was cantie, snog, & bricht,
A cheerie howff, & a crousie company
O philosophers & tiniks

Sydney Goodsir Smith

As Grevy marks domain with dung
He wrote of the Oxford Bar
Upon that New Town throughfare young
For Rebus’s rising star
This unsettling Morse of the North
The King of Tartan Noir
Brought new Miss Marples to the Forth
In the back of Poirot’s car
& these deep stories loved by both
Who spread his name afar
For bringing real Reekie to our minds
As very well his view of her unwinds!

“In Reekies streets,” he said, “I’ll never tire
Of every turns potential to inspire!”

NORTH CASTLE STREET

Away from the downtown cosmopolitan throng, life in the New Town goes on as it has done for more than two centuries, below the plasterwork in elegant drawing rooms or amid the shade of the private gardens overlook’d by palace-fronted facades

Fodor’s Exploring Scotland

As cupboards of dried fragrance
Made bodies sweet
Writers wander around houses
With minds as sharp as switch-blades

Kenneth Graheme at number 32
Albert Mackie at number 34
& at number 39 – Sir Walter Scott

As he spent his anni mirabilis
His family grew larger
His reputation stronger
& his word-count longer
With this wee slip castle view

He was sad to move to Abbotsford, you know
Friends, imagine living here for all your best years
TREASURE ISLAND

Queen Street Garden seems charming to the eye,
And a great boon it is to the tenantry near by,
As they walk along the grand gravel walks near there,
Amongst the big trees and shrubberies, and inhale pure air.

William McGonagall

In his house on Herriot Row
Writing upstairs at his window
Robert Louis Stevenson
Look’d out upon the park below
All brush’d with slumbering snow
But fingers far too frozen
He forg’d a novel plan
To find a tropic isle
& pirate caravan
To while away the while;
Tahiti, Hawaii
Those soft, Samoan sands
A life-death as hot breath
Blew warmth thro his hands

CALTON HILL

Edinburgh is a mad god’s dream
Hugh MacDairmaid
WANDERING DRAGON

Now for some incredible news. On Wednesday 30 Jan. 08 we played Edinburgh West. I was a player short and got one (Damian Bullen) from the third team. I waited twenty minutes at the Polish but he did not turn up so we left for the match. We all thought that defeat was certain with both a weakened team and a player short against a very strong Edinburgh West team. Then Damian Bullen turns up (he realised he was late - phoned my house and found out from my wife where we were playing and got a taxi), & won his game - with the result that we won 3.5-2.5 against all the odds.

   Don Heron

On pleasant Drummond Place
Inside the Polish Club
Two chess squads sip Zwychie
The magpie Sandy Bells
Play their games on Tuesday
Pieces godiva white
Or black as burning pies
While one random Wednesday
Living a square away
I join’d my local team
Those rebels of the league
Where Voyteks’s brotherhood
Share stories of the war
Over a friendly game

14C SCOTLAND STREET

Enchanting. It will make a delightful summer capital when we invade Britain

   Dr Joseph Goebells

My first Scottish address
Was quite eponymous
With clitemistrian fire
& phasiphan desire
M’lady moved me in,
This street bohemian
Prov’d perfect for mine art
With gardens set apart
My muses ain holy
Grotto of Puzzoli
Where classy students dwelt
& passing house-guests felt
As fortunate as me
This special place to be!
44 SCOTLAND STREET

I don’t wonder that anyone writing in Edinburgh should
cannot write poetically
Washington Irving

Don’t look for forty-four
For there is no such thing
No numbers on a door

‘Tis just a writer’s fling
Alexander McCall
Tapp’d into this deep spring

& brought back for us all
His lovely little tales
Each morning, on a roll

& piece-by-piece unveils
The pages of a book
Bouy’up by global sales

Whose readers come & look
For this mythical nook

THE ROYAL GYMNASIUM

From every angle, Edinburgh strikes theatrical poses
Fodor’s Exploring Scotland

How tranquil is this park
Wee giggling girls & boys
A spaniels happy bark –
Once lots of Los-lov’d noise

Back in the age of steam
Great trains would whistle shrill
& for Saint Bernard’s team
Their fans with phrenzies fill

& further back in time
John Cox’s crazy plan
Chang’s giant see-saw climb
& such Sea-Serpent span

From entertainments grand
Now, just this one-man band
**BROUGHTON STREET**

Striding along your wide paved elegance  
I wear no tights & one shoe flaps unbuckled  
Angela McSeveney

As a rose is a rose  
So a street is a rue  
Cream escarpments enclose  
Herbs, fajitas, vinos  
Moon & L’escargots blue

Seeing every success  
To these successes adds  
From this cool Chapman press  
Little Bliss & the Mezz  
To the plush, top-floor pads

There’s Punjabi cuisine  
There’s health food & there’s fat  
Books & paintings pristine,  
Believe me, it’s all that!

**CALTON HILL**

A thousand years of history  
Are here crystallized  
Within the circuit of a single glance  
William Winter

I am the Silver Rose,  
& with these streets shall fuse,  
To etch my gift in rhyme;  
For as our starbreeze blows,  
It too provokes the muse  
To join us, for a time!

She, for a time, shall serve  
All manners of mankind,  
Far delving through his realm;  
For this is Scotia’s verve,  
By Eldritch dream design’d  
Some hell-witch at the helm,

In dragon’s furnace born,  
By faerie fingers worn!
THE NATIONAL MONUMENT

From the Calton Hill the view is so vast, so grand & replete with everything that in either city. Sea or landscape can thrill or delight, that it has been said that he is a bold artist who attempts to depict it with either pen or pencil

James Grant

From Embro’s Parthenon
This Athens of the North
Towers over the Forth
& its firth - Aegean
Wee Inchkeith – Aegina
& Lysicratean
Burns honour’d forever

Calton – Lycabeltus
Pentlands – Mount Achesmus
The Braid Hills - Bulessus
Castle – Acropolis
Fife – Peloponessus
& the High School Regus - Temple of Theseus!

ROBERT BARKER

Edinburgh city centre doesn’t really look like a city centre. Its more like an 18th century landscape garden which has grown out of completely out of control

Robin Ward

A young Irish painter
Did round Calton wander
&, vista-to-vista
Brought Embro together
In one magic picture
Placed in a rotunda
For all folk to wonder
Man’s first Panorama!

His footsteps come follow
From Holyrood hollow
Up streets old & narrow
To the new Town below
& the strange Bass Rock snow
Sunset’s pinkening glow
CITY SUNSET

Het air is esaping fra St Andrew’s house
I’m on the Calton Hill. Level wi ma heid,
Their lum is causing a wamble in the air

Robert Garrioch

With Calton’s scatter’d crowd
I watch the sun go doon
Behind great banks of cloud
Deep-shadowing the toon
While Heaven’s avatar
Men call the lover-star
Gleams by a golden glint
As if a faerie far
- As looking makes me squint
So turn round at the hint

Now see, in watching eyes,
The dreaming saffron skies
Sun slipping neath the hills,
I zip up from the chills
Quite happy with the prize

LAMPLIGHTERS

At dusk the new town
Comes into its own

Stewart Conn

Thro Reekie’s sleeping murk
Our Leeries go to work
Soon glist’ring one-by-one
The city lights spring on
Knitting a jewell’d train
As if the Moors of Spain
Had here Cordoba built
& as the skyways wilt
In ever-fading light
Are makars made to write

As moon consumes the sun
& stars begin their fun
Our Leerie’s work is done
His twinkling webbing spun!
ADEUI GLENDA

Often when I call’d Edinburgh
A grey town without darting sun
It would light up with your beauty
A refulgent, white-starr’d town

Sorley Maclean

NORTH BRIDGE

It will perhaps meet the requirements of a century, & even in the future days of progress, it will also impress the modern Athenian

Gilbert Laurie

The last muse of the six
Arrives, not as my wife
But as an asterisk
A footnote in my life

“As it been seven years!”
“We no more innocent!”

“They happiness & tears
Our atoms different!”

& kissing soft my nape
Then to make her escape
M’lady changes shape

Her twinkling butterfly
Leaps for Ophicius
Then gone, without a fuss

As every human smile
Some thought originates
Each gate & bridge & stile
Some purpose demonstrates
This place the proper heart
Of Embro’s pentagon
That once was worlds apart
But now is merg’d as one
With views of seas & peak
Of plain & keep & spire
A city quite unique
‘Neath Heaven’s wide empire

One last look at the view
Then leave for vistas new
WAVERLY STATION

There’s no leaving Edinburgh,
No shifting it around: it stays with you, always

Alan Bold

Come, friends, descend these steps
Britain’s windiest spot
& try the hall awhile

Around us, the city
Houses just as many
As Kansas City does

& talking of cities
Then let us pick a twin
Future voyages begin;

Kyoto’s prefecture,
Krakow & Vancouver
Kiev, Segovia
Munich, San Diego
Nice, Dunnedin NZ!

LEAVIN REEKIE’

Auld reekie fare-ye-well, & Reekie New beside
Ye’re like a chieftan grim & gray, wi a young bonny bride

Baroness Carolina Nairne

Non moveromai cor-
da ove la turba
Di sue ciance
Assorda – time to go,
Having completed these
Chicken nugget sonnets
From Embro I depear
Prison’d by weary heart
As if I’d lost a friend
But with trance-waking shout
The train starts trundling slow
Past Haymarket, & now
Chants Latin down the track
Auld Reekie – I’ll be back!