

EAST SIDE

# 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 musicans 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 Hibe'e'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 paeon 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  
**James Hogg**

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 lollop 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'able  
Before mankind's capacity to rhyme  
Could capture time's passage in a bubble

## MEADOWBANK THISTLE

Edinburgh isn't so much a city, more a way of life  
**Ian Rankin**

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'*

## 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

Tw'as 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 among 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 Craigentenny 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

Dave Navvaro

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...

...In all my days I've never felt so free.

## PORTOBELLO PARK

Edinburgh is the perfect place for a civilised existence

Laura Fiorentini

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!

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

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

## 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'ral, 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,

*"& 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**

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

## SARCOPHAGI

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**

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!"*

Fingers sweep a trail  
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

## CHATELAUD

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!

## LOWER ROYAL MILE

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 outweighs 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!

## 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 & gagg'd, 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 quod, *"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 renaissent 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!

## UPPER ROYAL MILE

Edina! Scotias darling seat  
All hail thy palaces & towers  
Where once, beneath a monarch's feet  
Sat legislation's sov'reign powers  
**Rabbie Burns**

## 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 Burnetts'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 broollyless 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 Lothead**

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 protester'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!

## LUCKENBOOTHES

The sudden burst of genius in 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 consensus 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

### Traditonal

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 Edinburghers 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 enchanting 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

## SOUTH SIDE

### RAMSAY GARDENS

...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 lizabethan, 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 reprev'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 Episcopalian 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

## JK ROWLING

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 lit'rary 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 spurr'd

Scotch bird

Tax conn'd

## 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 McGonagal**

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

Edinburgh is what a city ought to be,  
somewhere to live & walk about in

**Sir John Betjemen**

## 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 yeas 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 ones 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 Lieutenant 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

Pararhym'd with consonance  
& growing confidence

**WEST SIDE**

**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

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

## ZEPPELINS

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 taylor 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 bossier  
& 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 Turacoo 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

## 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

What other capital city short of Lhasa stands so proudly &  
nakedly in defiance of the elements

**Charles McKean**

## 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 academies  
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 curricula, 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 & Marcus 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 lileam 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  
No other human entity I see as all time does slow  
Now pacings drop breathings deepen, the mind becomes verteux  
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 joiijuns the forth  
Ye dauner down the brae  
Wi views o fifes green kingdonm 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  
Athort 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 & murd'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 mazy 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 plies 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-giggling 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 himsel'  
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**

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 bespectacl'd 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!

## LEITH RACES

Whan on Leith sands the racers rare  
Wi jocky louns are met  
Their orra pennies there to ware  
& drown themselfs in debt

**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

## THE SHORE

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 Vesuvianous  
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.

## PORT O' LEITH

We do get folk dancing on the bar, but they don't get paid for it

**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 Lastericke 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 remnants 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

1672	\$	s.	d.
Jan 13. Lost at golf with Pitaro and Comissar Munro	0	13	0
“ Lost at golf with Lyon and Harry Hay	1	4	0
Feb 14. Spent at Leith at golf	2	0	0
Feb 26. Spent at Leith at golf	1	9	0
March 3. For three golf balls	0	15	0

Sir James Foulis

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 & gamb'l'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 its spaciousness extends  
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 allotmentees  
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

## 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!

Probably the most beautiful city we have ever seen

**The Black Eyed Peas**

## 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 aerial 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 glistering 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, Phobeter, 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 hoarsy 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 Karlsefinian, 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

Came 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 warld's seas up & down,  
& 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**

## 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

## 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!"*

## 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!

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

Twat 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 McTaggart'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 group, 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 preambulator, 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 Garrioch**

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

## THE NEW TOWN

## 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

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**

## NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Cohmla an iomhaigh an eibhneis  
Luathghaireach, domhain, leugach,  
Geur-aigne na Frainge's na Greige  
Ceol na h-Albann is na h-Eireann  
**Sorley Maclean**

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

## BANK OF SCOTLAND

It took the old town barely fifty years to die  
**Michael Lynch**

Sir Lawrence Dundas  
Stole the holy plot  
To build his home

Restless, pen'dd-in bankers  
Bought the house off him  
& adds a dome

Whenever inside  
Superb starry skies  
Come feel its force

As if we did stand  
Sumerian sand  
Plotting their course

Reminding us all  
Old Mammon still king

## 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 in 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 chandeliers  
A long line of lit'rature'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 enthral'd  
While puritanic minister appal'd

At last Scott has foregethert with his fiers  
*"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  
sweeping 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 illimitable 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

## EDINBURGH BOOK FESTIVAL

The largest public celebration of books in the world  
Festival Website

### 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

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!

## IAN RANKIN

...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 Grahame 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 McGonnagal**

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  
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 – Lycabellus  
Pentlands – Mount Achesmus  
The Braid Hills - Bulesus  
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 18<sup>th</sup> 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**

The last muse of the six  
Arrives, not as my wife  
But as an asterisk  
A footnote in my life  
*"Has it been seven years!"*  
*"We no more innocent!"*  
*"Thro 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

## 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**

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, Dunedin 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 depeart  
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!*