

Baudelaire in Scots

Scottish Spleen

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The Outlin

J Derrick McClure

‘WHA DAE YE LIKE BEST, ye unco cheil, wad ye tell us? Your faither, your mither, your sister or your brither?’

‘I haena nae faither, nae mither, nae sister nor nae brither.’

‘Your billies?’

‘Thon wird ye’re sayin’s yin I niver kent the meanin o, an dinna yet.’

‘Your kintra?’

‘I wadna ken whit airt tae seek it in.’

‘Bonnieness?’

‘Fine wad I like thon, war it a goddess ayebidin.’

‘Gowd?’

‘Thon gars me grue, as muckle as God gars you grue.’

‘Weel, whit *dae* ye like, byous outlin at ye are?’

‘Clouds I like ... clouds passin abune ... thonder ... hyne awa ... winnerfu clouds!’

A Jampher

James Robertson

IT WIS THE SKAILIN O the New Year: a bourach o glaur and snaw, crossed by a thoosan caurs, skinklin wi trantlums and whigmaleeries, heezin wi wants and waes, the graund gyteness o a muckle toun that wid whummle the heid o the dourest, maist aesome hermit.

In the mids o this stour and dirdum, a cuddy wis paddin, cawed on by a keelie wi a whup.

Jist as the cuddy's aboot tae turn a corner, here comes a toff, beglovit and buffed up, wi a collar like the jougs and his brent new claes like a jyle; and he bous his heid, mensefu-like, afore the puir beast, and says tae it, doffin his hat: 'Guid luck and guid health tae ye, sir!' syne turns tae some pals wi a glaikit look, as if spierin at them tae homologate his pleasure.

The cuddy didna even see the braw birkie, but jist cairried on whaur its darg bood tak it.

Me, I wis gruppit wi a dumfoonerin rage at this byous eejit, that seemed tae concentrate in his sel the haill ingyne o France.

Ilkane his ain Chimaera

Robert R Calder

ANEATH A BRAID GREY LIFT, on a vast stoory gressless level, wi nae sicht o a docken, even, or a thistle, I saw sindry chiels boued doun to the grunnd gangin alang.

Ilkane baer on his shouthers a colossal chimaera, wechty's ony sack o floor or coal, or as the gear o a Roman fuit-sodger.

No juist a deid wecht, ilka monster happed herself roun and oppressed wi puissant souple muscles the chiel she wes ridin, clawchin at his breist wi twa muckle talons. Her legended heid sat owre his brou lik some ugsome heidpiece an antique warrior waer to gar aye mair dreid in the fae.

I spiert o ane o the men, whit wey they went about lik thon. He didna ken, no him nor ony o the tithers, but it wes plain they were heidit somewhaur, aa o them gee'd on wi an invincible grienin to gang.

Gey queer, nane o the weyfaurers looked to be irked bi the ferocious thing hingin aboot his haus effectin union wi his back. Ae man said he took it for a pairt o himsel. Nae phys baer a dour trauchled look witnessin to despondency. Ablow the spleenfu dome o the heavens, their feet trudgin throu the stoor o a yird desolate as the lift, on they went wi a look o resolution lik folk damned aye to hope.

Sae thon procession went by and merged intil the lift o the horizon, whaur the planet taks aff her veils for the human ee's inquisitiveness.

I hung on a wee bit, tyauvin to comprehend this mystery, but

suin I wes owrtaen wi an indifference on me I coudna conquer,
ane bringin nae mair dejection wi it nor thae chiels showed ablow
their crushin Chimaeras.

The Dug and the Scent-Bottle

Tom Hubbard

‘ – MA BONNIE DUG, MA *guid* wee doag, aaaaaaaw ma tottie wee doaggikins, come here and get a whiff o this braw scent Ah bocht in the best shoppie in toun fir posh stinks.’

And the doaggie, aaaaaaaw waggin his tailie, fir that’s whit thir puir craiturs dae, juist like us haein a bit lauch and feelin fair joco, he comes up ti me curious-like, sticks his weet snottery neb on the apen bottle – then aa o a sudden he lowps back frae it, gey feart, barks at us likes he’s taen a richt scunner at us, ken?

‘Ach ye bastardin wee tyke ye, if Ah’d gien ye a poke o toalies, ye’d hae sniffed it richt blythe and mebbe wowfed it doun fir yer denner. Sae that’s it – even you, you that’s no fit ti be the pet o a puir bauchle like me, you’re juist sib ti the GREAT SCOTTISH PUBLIC, that wullnae thank ye fir the finer things in life, but wad raither ye gien thaim a personally selectit pile o shite.’