

I. POEMS OF LOVE



1. *Love*

O my love is like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June;
O my love is like the melody
That's sweetly played in tune.

5 As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in love am I;
And I will love thee still, my dear,
Till all the seas go dry.

10 Till all the seas go dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt with the sun,
I will love thee still, my dear,
While the sands of life shall run.

— Robert Burns

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2 **newly sprung** = recently appeared in bloom 4 **played** (on a musical instrument) 5 **art thou** = are you (inverted after *As fair*) **bonnie lass** = pretty girl (in Scots dialect) 7 **thee** = you 10 **melt** = turn into liquid **with the sun** = from the sun's heat 12 **sands of life** (life compared to the sand in an hourglass, for measuring the time) **run** = go on falling (into the glass below)

<A Reading of the Poem>

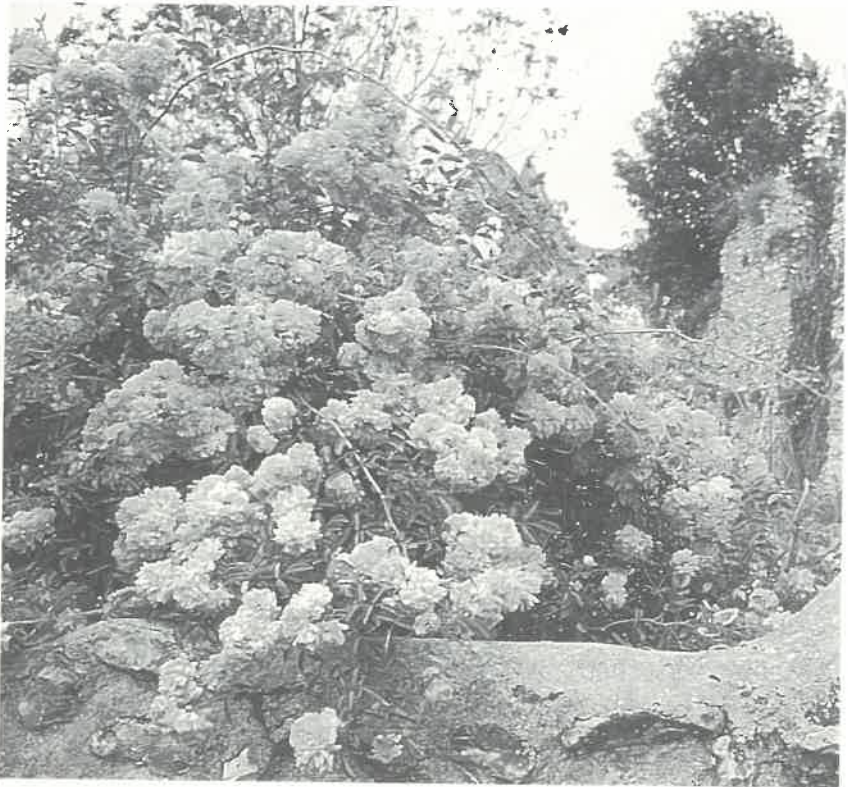
Love is the eternal theme of poetry. “Never durst poet touch a pen to write”, exclaims Shakespeare in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, “until his ink were tempered with love’s sighs.” Once a man falls in love with a woman, it seems, he naturally becomes a poet; and the woman is his poetic muse. So it was in the beginning with Adam when he first set eyes on Eve in the Garden of Eden. Till then he had only been giving names to various animals, but now he is inspired to compose the first love poem: “Here is bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh. She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”

The inspiration of love is always the same, as it was in the beginning, so it is now, and it will ever be till the end of time. Yet each experience of love is felt as unique, and as an awakening from sleep, as a passing from death to new life. “I wonder,” asks Donne in amazement, “by my troth what thou and I did till we loved?” It is an incomparable experience, and therefore it challenges the poet to explore all possible comparisons and metaphors. This is what gives rise to the language of love, and the poetry of love.

One such love poet is the national poet of Scotland, Robert Burns, who wasn’t content with merely writing poems of love but also set them to memorable music in the form of “Scottish Airs”. He sees his love — one of the many women in his life, though one, Jean Armour, came to rule supreme — as “a red, red rose that’s newly sprung in June”. He doesn’t seem to mind the banal comparison: it is so natural in English to compare one’s love to a rose. His love is no ordinary rose, but a doubly “red, red” one that doesn’t just flower in June but is “newly sprung in June”.

What’s more, he has a feeling of music in this comparison of his love to a rose. With every flower, and especially with every rose,

POEMS OF EITHER SHORE



there is a melody, a sweet song, as its unheard accompaniment; and when it's "newly sprung in June", the poet can't resist the temptation to rhyme it with "tune". And so what may have seemed banal in the mere comparison is given new life and meaning with the addition of
5 the melody.

Then from his love, as the feeling roused in the Man, he turns to the beauty of the Woman, as the cause of his love; and, like Adam in the beginning, he names her not only "my love", but also "my bonnie lass" (in the Scottish idiom) and (more affectionately) "my dear".
10 Then he goes on to emphasize the eternity of his love, "Till all the

seas go dry”, as a vivid elaboration of St. Paul’s “hymn of love”: “Love has no end.”

In this comparison of the seas going dry, to which he adds the other of the rocks melting with the sun, there is even a feeling of apocalypse, the end of the world. For his love is eternal, above the limits of time—and above the continual downward movement of the sand in an hour-glass with which human life in time is customarily measured.

〈鑑賞のてびき〉

Robert Burns(1759-96)は、スコットランドの貧しい農夫の子として生まれたが、英文学や聖書に親しみ、ほとんど独学でスコットランドを代表する詩人となる。彼の詩は、力強く粗削りなスコットランド方言を駆使し、庶民の日常生活を具体的に歌ったものが多い。中でも、スコットランド風のメロディーにのせて歌われる恋愛詩には佳作が多く、詩人の名声の確立に寄与している。酒と女性と歌(詩)を心底愛したバーンズは、道徳上非難されるべき幾つかの行状にもかかわらず、人生に寄せる希有の情熱と熱誠によって我々の心に残る詩を書いた。

この詩は、バーンズの数ある恋愛詩の中でも特に有名な作品の一つである。原詩は四つの stanza(連:一定の韻律的構成を持ち、通例4行以上からなる詩の単位)を持つが、このテキストでは最終連を省略した。恋人に永遠の愛を誓うこの詩の作者が、妻以外の何人かの女性に5人もの私生児を生まれ、37年の短い人生を自由奔放に生きた男であったことを知る時、読者は、作者と作品の皮肉な関係に当惑せざるを得ない。

バーンズの詩の多くがそうである様に、この詩についても幾つかの本歌の存在が知られている。次に掲げるスコットランドの古民謡 *The Wanton Wife of a Castle Gate* の一節と本編の第1連を比較すれば、バーンズの非凡な才能は自ずと明らかになる。

Her cheeks are like the roses
That blossom fresh in June.
O, she's like a new-strung instrument
That's newly put in tune.