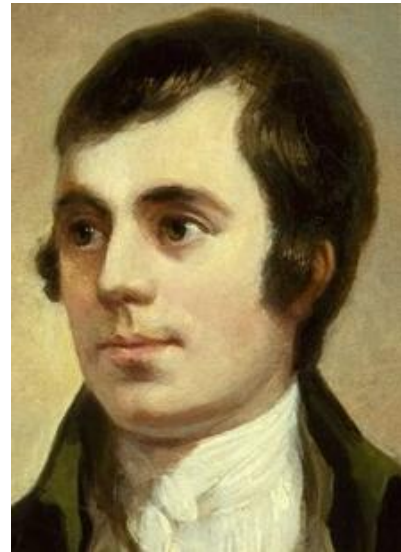


Today's poem is by ROBERT BURNS, who died in 1796 at the age of only 37. Robert Burns was a Scottish poet - though it's probably more accurate to say that he is THE Scottish poet: the most important poet ever to come out of Scotland, and the poet that all Scottish people regard as their poet, the guy who helped the Scottish people understand what it feels like to be Scottish. He is regarded so highly by Scottish people that every year, on Robert Burns' birthday on 25 January, Scottish people will come together and celebrate 'Burns Night' by eating traditional Scottish food like haggis (don't ask - as the comedian Mike Myers (who had a Scottish father) said, 'I think all Scottish cooking is based on a dare' (as in 'I dare you to eat this')) and reciting poems by Robert Burns.



This poem is probably Robert Burns' best and most famous. Like his other poems, it's written in Scots, which is like English but with some changes to reflect the distinctive way Scottish people speak. For example, another famous poem by Robert Burns begins 'Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled'. This poem imagines what the Scottish leader ROBERT BRUCE told his troops before the BATTLE OF BANNOCKBURN in 1314, when the Scottish fought for independence from the English. Robert Bruce begins by talking to the soldiers who fought with WILLIAM WALLACE, who was the Scottish leader who achieved a number of victories over the English before he was captured and killed by the English. (A fun, though really inaccurate, film about the life of William Wallace is BRAVEHEART.) 'Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled' is, in English 'Scots who have bled with Wallace'. But the Scots version sounds way better - when you say 'Scots wha hae' your voice goes up and you sound like you are rousing your troops to fight for victory. 'Scots who have bled with Wallace' sounds really dry and boring, like an accountant speaking. The poem I've picked for us to read is much more gentle - it's a love poem, like the one we had last week, and one of the best ever written:

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

So fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luve am I;
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
I will love thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luve!
And fare thee weel awhile!
And I will come again, my luve,
Though it were ten thousand mile.