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**Robert Burns, Robert Crawford & Christopher MacLachlan:
The Best Laid Schemes**

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My Father was a Farmer

My father was a farmer upon the Carrick border O
And carefully he bred me, in decency & order O
He bade me act a manly part, though I had ne'er a farthing O
For without an honest manly heart, no man was worth regarding O
Chorus Row de dow &c.

Then out into the world my course I did determine. O
Tho' to be rich was not my wish, yet to be great was charming. O
My talents they were not the worst, nor yet my education: O
Resolv'd was I, at least to try, to mend my situation. O

In many a way, & vain essay, I courted fortune's favor; O
Some cause unseen, still stept between, & frustrate each endeavor; O
Some times by foes I was o'erpower'd, sometimes by friends forsaken; O
And when my hope was at the top, I still was worst mistaken. O

Then sore harass'd, & tir'd at last, with fortune's vain delusion; O
I dropt my schemes, like idle dreams and came to this conclusion; O
The past wast bad, & the future hid; its good or ill untryed; O
But the present hour was in my pow'r, & so I would enjoy it, O

No help, nor hope, nor view had I; nor person to befriend me; O
So I must toil, & sweat & moil, & labor to sustain me, O
To plough & sow, to reap & mow, my father bred me early, O
For one, he said, to labor bred, was a match for fortune fairly, O

Thus all obscure, unknown, & poor, thro' life I'm doom'd to wander, O
Till down my weary bones I lay in everlasting slumber: O
No view nor care, but shun whate'er might breed me pain or sorrow; O
I live today as well s I may, regardless of tomorrow, O

But chearful still, I am as well as a Monarch in a palace; O
Tho' fortune's frown still hunts me down with all her wonted malice: O
I make indeed, my daily bread, but ne'er can make it farther; O
But as daily bread is all I heed, I do not much regard her. O

When sometimes by my labor I earn a little money, O
Some unforeseen misfortune comes generally upon me; O
Mischance, mistake, or by neglect, or my good natur'd folly; O
But come what will I've sworn it still, I'll ne'er be melancholy, O

All you who follow wealth & power with unremitting ardor, O
The more in this you look for bliss, you leave your view the farther; O
Had you the wealth Potosi boasts, or nations to adore you, O
A chearful honest-hearted clown I will prefer before you. O

To Ruin.

All hail! inexorable lord!
At whose destruction-breathing word,
 The mightiest empires fall!
Thy cruel, woe-delighted train,
The ministers of Grief and Pain,
 A sullen welcome, all!
With stern-resolved, despairing eye,
 I see each aimed dart;
For one has cut my *dearest* tye,
 And quivers in my heart.
 Then low ring, and pouring,
 The *Storm* no more I dread;
 Thou thick ning, and black ning,
 Round my devoted head.

And thou grim Power, by Life abhorred,
While Life a *pleasure* can afford,
 Oh! hear a wretch's pray'r!
No more I shrink appalled, afraid;
I court, I beg thy friendly aid,
 To close this scene of care!
When shall my soul, in silent peace,
 Resign Life's *joyless* day?
My weary heart its throbbings cease,
 Cold-mould ring in the clay?
 No fear more, no tear more,
 To stain my lifeless face,
Enclasped, and grasped,
 Within thy cold embrace!

The Death and Dying Words of Poor Mailie,

The Author s Only Pet Yowe, *ewe*

An Unco Mournfu Tale *extraordinarily*

As Mailie, an her lambs thegither, *and; together*
Was ae day nibbling on the tether, *one*
Upon her cloot she coost a hitch, *hoof; cast*
An owre she warsl d in the ditch: *over; wriggled*
There, groaning, dying, she did ly, *lie*
When *Hughoc*¹ he cam doytan by. *came stumbling*

Wi glowrin een, an lifted han s *with glomering eyes; hands*
Poor *Hughoc* like a statue stan s; *stands*
He saw her days were near hand ended,
But, waes my heart! he could na mend it! *woe is; not*
He gaped wide, but naething spak, *nothing spoke*
At length poor *Mailie* silence brak. *broke*

O thou, whase lamentable face *whose*
Appears to mourn my woefu case! *woeful*
My *dying words* attentive hear,
An bear them to my *Master* dear. *and*

Tell him, if e er again he keep
As muckle gear as buy a *sheep*, *much wealth*
O, bid him never tye them mair, *tie; more*
Wi wicked strings o hemp or hair! *with; of*
But ca them out to park or hill, *drive*
An let them wander at their will: *and*
So, may his flock increase an grow
To *scores* o lambs, an *packs* of woo ! *wool*

Tell him, he was a Master kin , *kind*
An ay was guid to me an mine; *and always; good*

1 A neibor herd-callan [Burns s note].

neighbour herd-lad

An now my *dying* charge I gie him, *give*
My helpless *lambs*, I trust them wi him. *with*

O, bid him save their harmless lives,
Frae dogs an tods, an butchers knives! *from; foxes*
But gie them guid *cow-milk* their fill, *give; good*
Till they be fit to fend themsel; *themselves*
An tent them duely, e en an morn, *tend; duly; evening*
Wi taets o *hay* an rippis o *corn*. *tufts of; handfuls of*

An may they never learn the gaets, *ways*
Of ither vile, wanrestfu *Pets!* *other; restless*
To slink thro slaps, an reave an steal, *through gaps; rob*
At stacks o pease, or stocks o kail. *cole, cabbage*
So may they, like their great *forbears*,
For monie a year come thro the sheers: *many; shears*
So *wives* will gie them bits o bread, *give*
An *bairns* greet for them when they re dead. *children weep*

My poor *toop-lamb*, my son an heir, *ram-*
O, bid him breed him up wi care! *with*
An if he live to be a beast, *and*
To pit some havins in his breast! *put; manners*
An warn him ay at ridin time, *always; breeding*
To stay content wi *yowes* at hame; *with ewes; home*
An no to rin an wear his cloots, *not; run; hooves*
Like ither menseless, graceless brutes. *other ill-bred*

An niest my *yowie*, silly thing, *next; ewe-lamb*
Gude keep thee frae a *tether string!* *go[o]d; from*
O, may thou ne er forgather up, *never meet*
Wi onie blastet, moorlan *toop*;
But aye keep mind to moop an mell, *any cursed moorland ram*
Wi sheep o credit like thysel! *always; munch and mingle*
yourself

And now, *my bairns*, wi my last breath,
I lea e my blessin wi you baith: *children*
An when ye think upo your Mither, *leave; both*
Mind to be kind to ane anither. *upon; mother*
remember; one another

Now, honest Hughoc, dinna fail,
To tell my Master a my tale;
An bid him burn this cursed *tether*,
An for thy pains thou se get my blather.

do not
all
you will; bladder

This said, poor *Mailie* turn d her head,
An clos d her een among the dead!

eyes; among

Poor Mailie s Elegy.

Lament in rhyme, lament in prose,
Wi saut tears trickling down your nose; *with salt*
Our *Bardie*'s fate is at a close, *[minor] poet's*
 Past a remead! *all remedy*
The last, sad cape-stane of his woes; *cope-stone*
 Poor Mailie's dead!

It s no the loss o warl s gear, *not; of worldly wealth*
That could sae bitter draw the tear, *so*
Or make our *Bardie*, dowie, wear *dismal*
 The mourning weed: *garment*
He s lost a friend and neebor dear, *neighbour*
 In *Mailie* dead.

Thro a the town she trotted by him; *through all*
A lang half-mile she could descry him; *long; spot*
Wi kindly bleat, when she did spy him, *with*
 She ran wi speed:
A friend mair faithfu ne er came nigh him, *more faithful never*
 Than *Mailie* dead.

I wat she was a *sheep* o sense, *know*
An could behave hersel wi mense: *with decorum*
I ll say t, she never brak a fence, *broke*
 Thro thievish greed.
Our *Bardie*, lanely, keeps the spence *lonely, sits in the best room*
 Sin *Mailie's* dead. *since*

Or, if he wanders up the howe, *valley*
Her living image in *her yome*, *ewe*
Comes bleating till him, owre the knowe, *to; over the knoll*
 For bits o bread;
An down the briny pearls rowe *roll*
 For *Mailie* dead.

She was nae get o moorlan tips,
Wi tauted ket, an hairy hips;
For her forbears were brought in ships,
Frae yont the TWEED.
A bonier *flesh* ne er cross d the clips
Than *Mailie's* dead.

*no offspring; rams
tangled fleece
from beyond
prettier fleece never; clippers*

Wae worth that man wha first did shape
That vile, wanchancie thing *a raep!*
It maks guid fellows girn an gape,
Wi chokin dread;
An *Robin's* bonnet wave wi crape
For *Mailie* dead.

*woe; who
unlucky; rope
makes good; grimace
choking
black mourning ribbons*

O, a ye *Bards* on bonie DOON!
An wha on AIRE your chanters tune!
Come, join the melancholious croon
O *Robin's* reed!
His heart will never get aboon!
His *Mailie's* dead!

*all
who; pipes
moan
reed-pipe
recover, get over it*

Mary Morison

O Mary at thy window be,
It is the wish d the trysted hour, *appointed*
Those smiles & glances let me see,
That make the miser s treasure poor.
How blythely wad I bide the stoure, *would; endure the struggle*
A weary slave frae sun to sun, *from*
Could I the rich reward secure,
The lovely Mary Morison!

Yestreen when to the trembling string *yesterday evening*
The dance gaed through the lighted ha , *went; hall*
To thee my fancy took its wing,
I sat, but neither heard, nor saw:
Though this was fair, & that was braw, *fine*
And yon the toast of a the town, *that one; all*
I sigh d, & said amang them a , *among*
Ye are na Mary Morison. *not*

O Mary canst thou wreck his peace
Wha for thy sake wad gladly die. *who: would*
Or canst thou break that heart of his,
Whase only faute is loving thee! *whose; fault*
If love for love thou wilt na gie, *not give*
At least be pity to me shown,
A thought ungentle canna be *cannot*
The thought o Mary Morison.

On a Noisy Polemic.

Below thir stanes lie Jamie s banes;

these stones; bones

O Death, it s my opinion,

Thou ne er took such a bleth ran b[i]tch,

talkative nuisance

Into thy dark dominion!

For the Author s Father.

O ye whose cheek the tear of pity stains,

Draw near with pious rev rence and attend!

Here lie the loving Husband s dear remains,

The tender Father, and the gen rous Friend.

The pitying Heart that felt for human Woe;

The dauntless heart that fear d no human Pride;

The Friend of Man, to vice alone a foe;

For ev n his failings lean d to Virtue s side.¹

1 Goldsmith [Burns s footnote, referring to Oliver Goldsmith s 'The Deserted Village' (1770), line 164].

A Fragment. [When Guilford Good our Pilot Stood]

When <i>Guilford</i> good our Pilot stood,	
An did our hellim thraw, man,	<i>and; helm turn</i>
Ae night, at tea, began a plea,	<i>one</i>
Within <i>America</i> , man:	
Then up they gat the maskin-pat,	<i>got; tea-pot</i>
And in the sea did jaw, man;	<i>pour</i>
An did nae less, in full Congress,	<i>no</i>
Than quite refuse our law, man.	
Then thro the lakes <i>Montgomery</i> takes,	<i>through</i>
I wat he was na slaw, man;	<i>know; not slow</i>
Down <i>Lowrie's burn</i> he took a turn,	<i>St Lawrence river</i>
And <i>C[a]rl[e]t[o]n</i> did ca , man:	<i>drive</i>
But yet, whatreck, he, at <i>Quebec</i> ,	<i>nevertheless</i>
Montgomery-like did fa , man,	<i>fall</i>
Wi sword in hand, before his band,	<i>with</i>
Amang his en mies a , man.	<i>among; all</i>
Poor <i>Tammy G[a]ge</i> within a cage	
Was kept at <i>Boston-ha'</i> , man;	<i>-hall</i>
Till <i>Willie H[ow]e</i> took o er the knowe	<i>went over; hill</i>
For <i>Philadelphia</i> , man:	
Wi sword an gun he thought a sin	
Guid Christian bluid to draw, man;	<i>good; blood</i>
But at <i>New-York</i> , wi knife an fork,	
Sir Loin he hacked sma , man.	<i>beef; small</i>
<i>B[u]rg[oy]ne</i> gaed up, like spur an whip,	<i>went</i>
Till <i>Fraser</i> brave did fa , man;	<i>fall</i>
Then lost his way, ae misty day,	<i>one</i>
In <i>Saratoga</i> shaw, man.	<i>thicket, wood</i>
<i>C[o]rnw[a]ll[i]s</i> fought as lang s he dought,	<i>long as he could</i>
An did the Buckskins claw, man;	<i>Americans strike</i>
But <i>Cl[i]nt[o]n's</i> glaive frae rust to save	<i>sword from</i>
He hung it to the wa , man.	<i>wall</i>

Then *M[o]nt[a]gue*, an *Guilford* too,
 Began to fear a fa , man; *fall*
 And *S[a]ckv[i]lle* doure, wha stood the stoure, *stern; who; strife*
 The German Chief to thraw, man: *thwart*
 For Paddy *B[u]rke*, like ony Turk, *any*
 Nae mercy had at a , man; *no; all*
 An *Charlie F[o]x* threw by the box, *dice-cup*
 An lows d his tinkler jaw man. *released his uncouth tongue*

Then *R[o]ck[i]ngh[a]m* took up the game;
 Till Death did on him ca , man; *call*
 When *Sh[e]lb[u]rne* meek held up his cheek,
 Conform to Gospel law, man:
 Saint Stephen s boys, wi jarring noise,
 They did his measures thraw, man, *oppose*
 For *N[o]rth* an *F[o]x* united stocks,
 An bore him to the wa , man. *wall*

Then Clubs an Hearts were *Charlie's* cartes, *playing-cards*
 He swept the stakes awa , man, *away*
 Till the Diamond s Ace, of *Indian* race,
 Led him a sair *faux pas*, man: *sore false step*
 The Saxon lads, wi loud placads, *placards, proclamations*
 On *Chatham's Boy* did ca , man; *call*
 An Scotland drew her pipe an blew,
 Up, Willie, waur them a , man! *get the better of; all*

Behind the throne then *Gr[e]nv[i]lle's* gone,
 A secret word or twa, man; *two*
 While slee *D[u]nd[ra]s* arous d the class *sly*
 Be-north the Roman wa , man: *Hadrian's Wall, the Scottish border*
 An *Chatham's* wraith, in heav nly graith, *attire*
 (Inspired Bardies saw, man) *minor poets*
 Wi kindling eyes cry d, *Willie*, rise!
 Would I hae fear d them a , man! *have; all*

But, word an blow, *N[o]rth, F[o]x, and Co.*

Gowff d <i>Willie</i> like a ba , man,	<i>golfed, struck; ball</i>
Till <i>Suthron</i> raise, an coost their claise	<i>Englishmen rose; threw off; clothes</i>
Behind him in a raw, man:	<i>row</i>
An <i>Caledon</i> threw by the drone,	<i>Scotland; bagpipe</i>
An did her whittle draw, man;	<i>knife</i>
An swoor fu rude, thro dirt an blood,	<i>swore full or very</i>
To mak it guid in law, man.	<i>make; good</i>

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