

First Holyroodian

Where is the horse? Where's the rider gone?
 Chthonic loam, unwit me tae sing
 ay when their bright hair flowed.
 Alas for this atelic urn,
 huv they crossed the Water ay Lethe? Come!
 There's day enough left; fair cheer fires embers,
 callin folk – share what's given, blend
 as wine is passed wi' in brimmin cups,
 for lusty revel is so aroused –
 fuse song an' praise: the owed.
 The Craic broadens the whole *topos*,
 a fine shore that welcomes *átopos*.
 Hear! Tyche chances, fomentin wi us,

mixin Mnemosyne an' Desire –
 this is her genial face ay two;
 fortune doubly arrives,
 as Hesiod told ay twin strife;
 Nyx bore them: one impels folk tae strive,
 rooted in earth, our piquin catalyst –
 strife like this provides mortals well;
 the other that comes – as in Eris –
 rains discord an' vile conflict our way,
 her child, Concealin Leith,
 who is twice called, water an' *llaith*.
 So Tyche shows; tears ay surest spring,
 yet contingency is their source ay flow;

they're no one, not other – wi'drawn, until
 discovered. We've found what we sought,
 hit a *leith*, traced its track
 tae the heidend, where fie the so-called
 Pentlands, we arrive upon a city,
 bloomin fluent tongues an' rich in games.
 There! – its beacon seat, couchant lion, holdin
 its nerve, as when a victor has yet tae
 win oot. Ah huv time still
 tae make the occasion an' settle the ode.

Folk journey wi mesmeric water,
 cyclin as Rain is wont tae dae;
 buddin anabasis,
 till crestin mountains – fat in yield! –
 then loosed; Oh! Wine-dark ouroboros –
 ground entranced, our honeyed katabasis;
 many courses such ranges gift.
 Tae dart where we'll be received, we need
 one bickerin montane cord, threaded
 by yon site ay great games;
 Braid Burn rest us, round siblin loch –
 rare Treverlen, stocked wi graves an' bronze –
 free us near the bright field ay victory.

Fie *a-topos*, I've found this topos:
 Holyrood, site ay sacred rites,
 grandeur erupts across
 your endurin faces, tumblin
 the godsent intae broad heaps – strange fruits!
 Where your bright horses range, wi barrow strain,
 folk waver in worthy contests.
 Our time is a midden, dusky dawns
 an' dawny dusks – uncertainty reigns:
 what made these eoliths?
 As wi rains, as wi tears, as like
 our plots, that can bear treasures, an' then
 nowt but wastes. We hesitate in our hold.

But no this day, for we've arrived upon
 a flake ay Eos amidst stone,
 no hoards ay hacksilver,
 by Tyche's techne we've mystery –
 earthbound aestel, our lambent victor.
 Crowned thyme, inspiration ay great price,
 she has brought the other side ay tears; joy
 tae tribe Hominini, awe-striker
 tae poets seekin fame –
 Leanne Muir rounded triumph wi Gringolet.

Envigored by well-mingled measures,
 oor Lallans step lifts 'em fie earth
 tae canter in due praise;
 they won the gether at ridin
 an' wear thyme upon heid an' bridle,
 showin honor 's hame in their Holyrood –
 may the wings ay song spread 'em far.
 Such inspiration makes fame easy,
 yet Poesy comes after, hand in hand
 wi dear Festivity,
 callin oot for drinks tae be mixed
 tae blend hard exertion wi rare peace,
 an alloy fine as wine is victory.

Arrivin after as memory,
 ah yearn your drawin nigh, but then –
 oh, peripeteia!
 Did your veerin cause this vision?
 Our earths touched, those strikin finitudes!
 Sincere object aimed-for, we reach ainely
 your sensual fame shimmerin
 as haze fie Arthur's Seat this bright May.
 These strange qualities alight after,
 greetin this lot, an' we
 wonder on the chance we're given
 tae fuse anew your well-wrought wraith;
 genesis worth as yon Achilles' shield.

Leanne your gracious xenia transforms –
 through symbiosis' embracin bond –
 brute strangers tae guest-friends;
 gods, beasts, hills, aw cognates, nane ootwi
 the vast respirin ay your deep breadths;
 intimacy makes you host an' hame –
 a city ay welcome for weary folks.
 Fame – flipped coin! – has awways an underside;
 figures loom otherwise,
 horses an' riders, casts ay base infamy.

Mixin bears but an imagined end,
 ask Ixion his labour in
 the Ixionidae;
 his first son blighted by vile birth,
 bestiality leads loathsome war.
 The radge king trysted wi white-armed Hera,
 his heid wis in a bust ay clouds;
 Nephele, an act ay god ill-starred;
 fie yon welkin source hailed warlike clods,
 chance dawn an' joy turned tae
 Kentauros; his uncouth horse-brood
 over-keen on sheer wine. Ixion,
 did you dream your line as the wheel ay fire?

Courses twist stranger than widdershins,
 alterin ootwi aw control;
 stiff lineage offers
 names no reflexive guarantee;
 Indo-European sources branches
 free ay roots wi recondite ancestry;
 fie one family *kist*, horsemanship
 morphs, mutates, burgeonin as *marcachd*.
 Proud Bellerophon, ay heroic stock
 till regressin too far
 upon the goldy Pegasus;
 sparked by dormant ingenuity,
 he dreamed the golden future ay horses –

how high he broke. Oh, subtle chimera,
 sure summit wi'in the spindrift
 hidin catastrophe;
 ruthless rocks, steady course ay folks' fate.
 Wi'oot Pegasus, a mere exile
 wanderin, little but a famed name;
 wi yon noble horse, an infamous mix.
 Frail hubris, its *telos* warped by the
 tiny horsefly's effect.
 Your bond strays no those Pillars ay Cùil Choinnich,

horse-rider your chanced fame basks skywards,
 dual heids an' tails a lit façade
 radiatin Eos.
 Rose in splendour the Equidae
 fie the lean sprigs ay Chicxulub's light.
 Dawn horse, Eohippus, were you first tae
 bud an' trip the earth fantastic?
 Horse fame is maire than the Trojan one,
 no brimmin Odysseus' deceits,
 ainely Deep Time's largess
 pressin your era tae one course
 through Hemera's brace tae this triumph!
 Lothian Gringolet, Scottish Clydesdale,

your *darg*, coal-barrow that tintured earth
 wi anthropocene; eclipsin
 new life, Plutonium.
 Tae plumb *kairos* escapes the rank
 measure ay *chronos*; a moment sheer
 shinnin forth where aw are equals in time.
 Our warld, aw go untae yin place –
 would that our steep midden could sail aff,
 cryin *Gardylloo*, an' leavin
 this braw hie-heapit toun.
 But that is dusk tae Triumph's dawn,
 we've maist-ancient Helios' drawn course
 still tae run; an edgeless storied horse-urn.

Dawn Horse, ah've measured your song in leg bones,
 lithe line cropped ay vestigials.
 Three-toed-twofold followed,
 Miohippus ancient-born, linkage –
 as wi yon Oligocene – betwixt
 archaic epochs an' those new born;
 your kin bridged the forest an' the prairie.
 Drawnin near, shows Parahippus, then,
 no time tae ruminare,
 Merychippus foxed bear an' bone-crushin dogs.

Then Equus, true horse, turned west tae east,
 raced Beringia as the sun,
 our Old World your new one.
 Ah hear Time's hoofed chariot
 an' yon first steppe ay our fatal mix;
 by bairns ay Tethys – those great inland seas –
 we stood disrobed as horse-rider;
 hooves, an' hands, an' wheels, aw the gether,
 Caspian tae Innocent Railway
 beneath Samson's black Ribs;
 we gallop midst the Lion's watch,
 like in ages past swift-footed friend.
 Equus – felled an' raised you in horsemanship.

How much maire our bond? How far? How deep?
 Aw marks an' frames lesser than thought,
 entangled up in angst;
 ay shared strain, yon Great Khan an' War,
 an' dark star wi'drawn, Phoebus LUCA
 tells that in late spring strange horses will come,
 their heids like wild waves chargin –
 yon deep future ootwi victory.
 Such a bristlin blazin bush ay songs!
 Ah'm nigh spent, as Pindar
 exhausted by lush Aegina;
 her stolons sent that matchless runner –
 Aeacus' blood slayed horse-tamin Hector.

Yose cry, *Get intae line!* Like ah'm wayward.
 Praise crafts maire than coarse minin does,
 extractin tricks ay light.
 Leanne wears fragrant thyme for ridin;
 wi fair Calum, she's fired Eidyn's loch –
 blazin victors, Craggenmarf minds you!
 At Meadowbank these friends humbled others;
 Arthur's whin-cairns, strikin aw speechless.
 Mind, creatures ay a day,
 wins slip, an' the chorus hints – *life 's a mixed bag.*