**Shift yersel owre, Rabbie, an mak space fir a national lassie**

**by Alistair Heather**

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Burns Nicht is here aince mair. Aa owre this guid green warld, Scots an their sympathisers will pit oan their best tartan breeks, kilts, sashes an bunnets, an heid for a local dinner.

Ae dey a year we aa breenge oot fae oor hidden neuks, oor mooths aflame wi Burns’ Scots an oor bellies aflame wi strang hielan uisge-beatha. We haver on aboot the values o freedom an equality, resistance tae tyranny, an aa that Scotland stauns fir in this tapsalteerie warld.

Then the next-again dey sees us hingin up aa wir tartan duds, pittin wir Scots tongues back intae the press alang wi oor dirks an kilt soaks. Scotland an aa her Burns-inherited notions safely back in the box unner the bed fir anither year.

Burns is cairtin owre muckle a load fir ae single Ayrshire mannie. An a hail nation sae complex an modren as Scotland needs mair nor ae champion.

Scotland could dae wi a new poetic hero wha could gie voice tae oor new environmentalist impulse, tae the ambition thats mair common nor ever in Scotland tae heize up women tae truly equal status wi men, an tae appreciate the abundant beauties an discovery open tae us in oor hauf-toom glens.

***Shift yersel owre, Rabbie, an mak space fir a national lassie* by Alistair Heather**

**Activity: Scots Language Award – Level 6**

*Hints for learners:*

* *‘uisge-beatha’ is a Gaelic word. It literally means ‘water of life’ but is commonly used to mean ‘whisky’.*
* *‘toom’ is a Scots word. It means ‘empty’.*

**Activity 1**

Complete this task to demonstrate your understanding of the language used in this article.

* Read the section from Alistair Heather’s newspaper column, ‘**Shift yersel owre, Rabbie, an mak space fir a national lassie**’, then fill in the blanks in each question.
* You may only choose options from the words below.
* Consider the denotation (meaning) of each word, as well as their connotations (suggestions or implications).
* It may help if you determine if the word you are trying to define is a verb, noun, adjective or adverb.
1. ‘Ae dey a year we aa breenge oot fae oor hidden neuks…’

‘Breenge’ means rush and has connotations of carelessness, impatience and haste.

1. ‘…an aa that Scotland stauns fir in this tapsalteerie warld…’

‘Tapsalteerie’ means upside-down and has connotations of chaos, confusion and disorder.

1. ‘…tae heize up women tae truly equal status…’

‘Heize’ means lift and has connotations of exertion, effort and laboriousness.

rush breathe laugh lovely laboriousness chaos

carelessness effort dance impatience peer

weepy exertion disorder fear haste hinge

lift upside-down confusion stand cheer

**Activity 2**

Answer the following questions to demonstrate your understanding of this article.

1. The writer acknowledges that Burns night is celebrated:
2. Only in Scotland.
3. Across the U.K.
4. In Ayrshire.
5. Worldwide.
6. The writer lists some activities that people participate in to celebrate Burns. Select **only** the activities that are acknowledged:
7. Dancing to traditional Scottish music.
8. Participating in school assemblies.
9. Wearing traditional clothing.
10. Eating haggis and oatcakes.
11. Attending special dinners.
12. Drinking whisky.
13. Reciting Burns poetry.
14. Playing the bagpipes.
15. What does the writer suggest that Scotland needs?
16. Independence.
17. Modern literature.
18. A new literary idol.
19. A stronger economy .
20. Which phrase tells us that too much importance is placed on Burns?
21. ‘bellies aflame’
22. ‘owre muckle’
23. ‘unner the bed’
24. ‘abundant beauties’

5 i) When the writer says that we put ‘wir Scots tongues back intae the press’, he is using a specific literary technique. Which technique does he use?

1. Repetition
2. Euphemism
3. Imagery
4. Word choice
5. Antithesis

5 ii) What does this phrase mean?

1. We stop speaking Scots.
2. We hide our political opinions.
3. We use the media to promote Scots.
4. We are pressured to use Scots.

**Activity 3**

Answer these questions to demonstrate your understanding of purpose and audience.

1. What is the main purpose of this text? Select two of the following statements:
2. To suggest that Scottish people celebrate a different writer.
3. To criticise Burns poetry.
4. To ridicule those who wear Scottish traditional dress.
5. To provoke thought about the use of Scots in speaking and writing.
6. Which audience is this text suitable for? Select all audiences that are suitable:
7. People who are interested in the various tartans of Scotland.
8. Teachers who are looking for resources to teach Burns.
9. People who are interested in Scottish literature.
10. People who are interested in the indigenous languages of Scotland.