

The Ballad of John Leith the Third

Kirsty Lawie

D'you ken about John?
John fae roon the back o' Gordon?
His grunny's brither wis a Jacobite?

Aye well John:
Shot in the merkit gate, ootside Aerchies.
Ach well at's fit happens fan ye ging to a place lik at.

Peer quine, hid fowr loons but eens deid,
Allest nae jist ten.
She'll nae be there much langer.

Wis an affa mount o' drink involved.
Peggy, ken Peggy, bides ower the road fae Dod?
Her man's ih dominee fir Auchterturra?

Aye well Peggy's sisters' mans' untie's pal,
Doreen,
Kens ih boy.

Anyellniverbelivehis
Ih boy's grunny's brither wis anither jacobite!
Like John's grunny's brither?

Och yer coorse nae lisnin.
How d'yenae ken John?
Thought you kint the Jacobites.

Judge's comment:

There's a genuine feel for rhythm and sound pattern here, and the use of Scots is completely convincing and lively throughout. Underneath the comic delivery is a more serious (and clever) theme of community and family, and the ways these things are labelled and memorialised, all subtly and amusingly connected to echoes of Scottish history and national identity. A witty piece of writing that plays around with poetic expectations and conventions in a fresh and likeable way.