

MLitt Scottish Literature – Sample Seminar texts

Robert Burns, 'Robert Bruce's March to Bannockburn' (1793)

Scots, wha hae wi Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,
Welcome tae yer gory bed,
Or tae victorie.

Now's the day, an now's the hour:
See the front o battle lour,
See approach proud Edward's power –
Chains and Slaverie.

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha will fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Let him turn an flee.

Wha, for Scotland's king and law,
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand, or Freeman fa,
Let him on wi me.

By Oppression's woes and pains,
By your sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free.

Lay the proud usurpers low,
Tyrants fall in every foe,
Liberty's in every blow! –
Let us do or dee.

(excerpt from) Irvine Welsh, *Trainspotting* (1993)

- Some size ay station this wis. Git a train tae anywhair fae here, at one time, or so they sais, ah [Renton] sais, watchin ma streaming pish splash oantae the cauld stane

- If it hud fuckin trains, ah'd be oan one oot ay this fuckin dive, Begbie said. It wis uncharacteristic for him tae talk about Leith in that way. He tended tae romanticize the place.

An auld drunkard, whom Begbie had been looking at, lurched up tae us, wine boatil in his hand. Loads ay them used this place tae bevvie and crash in.

- What yis up tae lads? Trainspottin, eh? He sais, laughin uncontrollably at his ain fuckin wit.

- Aye. That's right, Begbie sais. Then under his breath: - Fuckin auld cunt.

-Ah well, ah'll leave yis tae it. Keep up the trainspottin mind! He staggered oaf, his rasping, drunkard's cackles filling the desolate barn. Ah noticed that Begbie seemed strangely subdued and uncomfortable. He wis turned away fae us.

It wis only then ah realised thit the auld wino wis Begbie's faither.

(excerpt from) Jackie Kay, *The Lamplighter* (2008)

Scene 13: British Cities

Black Harriot London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Bristol,
Glasgow, Edinburgh, Lancaster, Hull.

Lamplighter I put those cities on the map.

Song (*Folksong*)

Mary Virginia Street, Tobago Street, Jamaica Street, Ingram
Street, Glassford Street

Macbean John Glassford, partner in Thistle Bank
Owned twenty-five slave ships.
His annual turnover was half a million sterling.

Song (*Folksong*)

Black Harriot (*sings*) I'm only a common working slave.

Song (*Protest song.*)

All sing *But the banks are made of marble
With a guard at every door
And the vaults are stuffed with silver
That the people sweated for.*

Constance Ten twenty thirty forty fifty sixty seventy eighty one
hundred pounds, ten twenty thirty forty fifty sixty seventy
eighty. Two hundred thousand pounds. (*And so on.*)

FX (*We hear the sound of money being counted*)

Black Harriot Buchanan Street is my main shopping street,
apart from Sauchiehall Street.
That's where I get my bling!

Macbean Bishop Pococke visited Glasgow in 1760. He remarked,
'this city has above all others felt the advantages of the
union in the West Indian trade which is very great
especially in tobacco, indigoes and sugar'.

Constance I put that city on the map.

Song *I belong to Glasgow, dear old Glasgow town.
There's nothing the matter with Glasgow,
For it's going round and round.*

[...]

Lamplighter May 22, 1731, the slave ship Neptune
Of Port of Glasgow, dropped anchor in
Carlisle Bay, Barbados.
On board were 144 enslaved Africans
Who had been shackled for nearly a year
With leg irons.

Mary And alas! I am weary, weary O

Black Harriot (*sings*) I belong to Glasgow and Glasgow belongs to me!

Lamplighter Some stories don't have a name to their voice.
I built those houses, brick by brick.

Black Harriot My head is on the red brick Customs House in Liverpool in
between the elephants.

Lamplighter The Tobacco Merchant's House, The Trades Hall, The
Gallery of Modern Art, Venturer's House:

Black Harriot London, Liverpool, Bristol, Manchester, Glasgow belongs
to me!