

William Soutar
NATURE POEMS

Nae day sae dark

Nae day sae dark; nae wüd sae bare;
Nae grund sae stour wi' stane;
But licht comes through; a sang is there;
A glint o' grass is green.

wüd - wood
stour - dust

Wha hasna thol'd his thorter'd hours
And kent, whan they were by,
The tenderness o' life that fleurs
Rock-fast in misery?

thol'd - suffered

Yon Toun

1
Hae ye come in be yon toun
Ablow the craigie knowes?
Hae ye come in be yon toun
Whaur the clear water rows?

knowes - hills

rows - rolls

2
Birk and rodden on the brae,
Hawthorn in the hauch;
And clear water churlin by
The elder and the sauch

birk - birch; rodden - rowan
hauch - meadow

sauch - willow

3
At day-daw and at grey-fa'
The merry bells ding doun:
At day-daw and grey-fa'
There's music in yon toun

day-daw - dawn

4
Merlie and mavis whistle clear;
thrush
And when the hour is still
Haikers owre the auld brig hear
The gowk upon the hill.

merle - blackbird; mavis -

haikers - walkers
gowk - cuckoo

5

Wha wudna bide in yon toun
Ablow the craigie knowes?
Wha wudna bide in yon toun
Whaur the clear water rows?

Bogle Brig

Ootby auld Perth whan folk wud leg
Awa to Luncarty
They a' gaed through the Bogle Brig
That boo'd abüne their wey.

bogle - ghost

It was gey lang, and laich, and mirk,
And aye dreep-drappin weet;
But bogles or their boglie wark
I hinna met wi' yet.

laich - low

And noo there's nane, wha tak the road
To Luncarty, will ken.
The auld brig's doun; and whaur it stüde
Is nocht but steel and stane.

At Tibbermuir

There was a wren o' Tibbermuir
Sae waukrife in the simmer daw
That she gat on a palin' stob
Afore the cock wud craw.

waukrife - restless

She breisted like a puddy-doo;
She tirl'd upon her tipper-taes;
And, in a whup, her whirlywas
Brel'd owre the caller braes.

puddy-doo - frog

tirl - twirl

whirlywas - grace notes

brel - roll quickly

Up steer'd the cock and gien a craw:
Up steer'd the coo and gien a croun:
Up steer'd the sin – and there was a'
The bricht world birlin' roun'.

birl - spin

The Gowk

Half doun the hill, whaur fa's the linn
Far frae the flaught o' folk,
I saw upon a lanely whin
A lanely singin' gowk:
Cuckoo, cuckoo;
And at my back
The howie hill stüde up and spak:
Cuckoo, cuckoo.

linn - waterfall
flaught - flock
whin - rock
gowk - cuckoo

howie - hollow (echoing)

There was nae soun'; the loupin' linn
Hung frostit in its fa':
Nae bird was on the lanely whin
Sae white wi' fleurs o' snaw:
Cuckoo, cuckoo;
I stüde stane still;
And saftly spak the howie hill:
Cuckoo, cuckoo.