

25<sup>th</sup> January 2022

## Roses

**"Each morn, a thousand roses brings, you say."**

*Edward Fitzgerald, The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*

Today we will celebrate the life and work of Scotland's national poet, Robert Burns. Born on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1759, Burns died at the age of 37. But in his short life he left us a remarkable collection of poems and songs, in Scots and English. Tonight there will be Burns' Suppers in all corners of the world. Rituals will be followed, haggis will be addressed, toasts will be given, drams will be drunk, poems will be recited, and songs will be sung to mark Burns' Night and honour the memory of this remarkable man.

One of Burns' best-known songs is "*My Luve Is Like A Red Red Rose*."

*My luve is like a red red rose that's newly sprung in june;  
O my Luve's like the melodie that's sweetly play'd in tune;  
As fair art thou, my bonnie lass, so deep in luve am I;  
And I will luve thee still, my dear, till a' the seas gang dry;*

*Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear, and the rocks melt wi' the sun;  
I will luve thee still, my dear, while the sands o' life shall run.  
And fare thee weel, my only Luve and fare thee weel, a while!  
And I will come again, my Luve, tho' it were ten thousand mile.*

Burns worked on projects to preserve traditional Scottish songs for the future, particularly for George Thomson's five-volume *A Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs for the Voice*, including this song. However, he wrote to a friend that Thomson and he disagreed on its merits. "What to me appears to be the simple and the wild, to him, and I suspect to you likewise, will be looked on as the ludicrous and the absurd."

Yet David Daiches, a Scottish historian, describes Burns as "the greatest songwriter Britain has produced" for his work in refurbishing and improving traditional Scots' songs. And Bob Dylan has said that the words of Burns' *My Luve Is Like A Red Red Rose*, are among the lyrics that have had the biggest effect on his life, a source of his greatest creative inspiration.

Ludicrous and absurd? I don't think so. The beauty and simplicity of the metaphors in Burns' words are burned in my soul. My own love is like a red, red rose to me, and I thank God that "each morn a thousand roses brings" when I think of the love of my life.

### **A prayer for today**

*My love? A red, red rose. God's Love? Beyond my imagining and description.*