



**Auld Jimmy  
by J. R. McLean**

## Auld Jimmy

This poem is written in the style of the many poems written by Jimmy Hempstead. For many years he was the driving force behind Dumbarton Burns Club and his many 'versifications' were enjoyed at club events and were published by the Club - latterly in a collated edition that he called "Ragbag of Rhyme" - copies are available from

[www.dumbartonburnsclub.com](http://www.dumbartonburnsclub.com) at £7 per copy

The characters in the first part of this poem are current members of the Club : each with their own charisma and talents. I trust they are not offended.

In the latter part the subjects are from Jimmy's first book of poems, 'Rhyme for Fun' and describes how they carry on with their 'life' when they have reached 'heevan'. In many ways a sequel to the original poems.

I'm greatly indebted to Jimmy. I showed him this poem with trepidation but he took in good part and then went on to give me the benefit of his expertise: I am delighted to incorporate his suggestions.

To get the full benefit of the text, familiarity with the original poems would be a considerable benefit.

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Noo Jimmy's feenished his crownin' glory,  
Whaur he telt aboot folk a' gone afore ye,  
His Cronies, Colleagues an ither gentry,  
They're a' in there, wi' their ain wee entry.  
But they're no' why this poem was spun:  
We'll meet some folk frae 'Rhyme for Fun',  
An' ither chiels who are still livin',  
An' hiv'nae reached the state o' heaven.

The tale that you are goin' tae hear  
Came to me, late one night, last year.  
I dreamed Auld Jimmy'd passed away  
And soon thereafter made his way  
Until he reached the heavenly gate,  
He stepped right up, he didn't wait.  
St. Peter spoke a kindly word,  
*"Come on in; don't be disturbed,  
Your sad times noo are in the past,  
Your future's great; ye're here at last  
Ye'll meet wi' a' your cronies soon,  
But first I think ye should sit doon"*

Jimmy sat, then he looked below,  
Tae see his freens sat in a row:  
The crem(atorium) wus full o' his relations,  
Wi' Burns and boolin' delegations:  
Dressed tae the nines, they were a' discussin',  
How they thought that *"it had been a blessin,  
He was no the same as at the time--  
--- his faculties were at their prime"*  
An', *"How the poems aboot those men,  
Would ne'er be found in print again"*.

Then they arise wi' their heids a' bent,  
An' while Lawrie played an auld lament.  
Jim's kist's brought in by six guid men  
It was Tap o' the Range, from John H. Glen  
(John was a local undertaker--  
---but ye'll here mair about him a wee bit later)

Weel, the meenister's had chosen his words wi' care,  
So there's nae hauf mile grace or 3 mile prayer,  
He solemnly read the epitaph,  
That gied Auld Jim a guid send aff  
Well the service o'er, the praises given  
(That's when Jimmy knew he was in heaven,)  
Then they a' file out: their heids a' bowed,  
While the organ plays Burns songs aloud

Then Colin Lawrie's gied a final blaw,  
(His heid as white as Christmas sna'),  
An' off they go tae the Big Green,  
Where a' the mourners soon are seen--  
- - wi' a glass in haun an' ge'in' a toast --  
- - tae Jimmy's memory, an' damn the cost.  
The chat soon turns to the evil, drink,  
An' whit the company a' think -  
Is the best malt for this occasion,  
Of Jimmy's heevanly integration ?

Talisker, Cardhu and Bowmore:  
They were a' in the frame, ach, ye could add hundreds more!  
Bob Callander disnae give a damn,  
He'll drink onie maker's dram.  
But Moir prefers an old Laphroaig  
That's the one that maist folk would avoid.  
A glass a day keeps him germ free,  
Tho' it makes him smell o' o' TCP!

Noo, Jamie spiered o' his Heavenly Host  
(He really thought he'd seen a ghost!)  
*“Are a' the folk ah wrote aboot,  
In silly rhymes o' disrepute,  
Just sittin' here an havin' fun,  
An eatin' ambrosia by the ton?  
Or are they busy every day,  
Wi' reading books and gouf and play?”*

Tae be immortalised in Jimmy's verses,  
The great and good were at his mercies.  
Lampooned, but in a gentle way,  
They a' agreed that he'd held sway,  
An' noo that he had come up here,  
There'll be naethin' left for them tae fear!  
Nae worries noo that they'll be next,  
Tae feel the brunt o' Jimmy's text.

Bob Callander then knew that a' he'd seen,  
Will ne'er be telt tae his Bonnie Jean.  
The fun he'd had in far off lands,  
Will ne'er fa' into Jimmy's hands!  
His indiscretions great an' sma',  
Fa' aff the dyke like springtime sna',  
Perchance they were his best achievement:  
They'll no get the “Hempstead Treatment!”

Noo Moir Nelson's freezer's fu' o' game,  
'cause he likes tae shoot them and that's the shame,  
Each week he goes tae feeds the ducks,  
But they just don't know they're oot o' luck.  
He feeds them up tae make them bigger,  
So he can't miss when he pulls the trigger!  
Auld Jimmy thinks he'd die wi' laughter,  
(But he's already in his own hereafter ---  
--- or he'd have made a poem o' that,)  
*“The ducks can't fly 'cause they're so fat!”*

Wee George complained at the funeral feast,  
*“They should have charged £10 pounds at least,  
My sausage rolls were under cooked,  
The funeral ham's been overlooked.  
The soup was cauld and poorly served”,*  
So he thought he'd gie it a body swerve,  
Well, the food was poor but on the whole,  
But tae miss free grub, he couldna thole.

Then John Young wants tae gie an oration,  
But he's in yon Guinness book under 'Talks for the Nation'!  
So Doc. Barlow stauns tae quotes some Burns,  
But the wan's he knows have done their turn,  
So he'll huv tae learn anither poem,  
Just as soon as he gets home.  
At least ane hauf o' a guid two-hander,  
He'll gie Rabbie's Works anither gander.  
He must consult wi' his partner, Mike,  
An find a poem they baith will like.

Mike Taylor, on the ither haun,  
Disnae think it wuid be thrawn,  
Tae dip intae Ragbag o' Rhyme.  
An', as soon as he can find the time,  
He'll learn the wan about Frien' Sanny,  
An hope that Barlow fins it canny.  
The pair of them will then recite,  
The hale poem on St Andrew's Night.  
*(Auld Jimmy thought that wan was his best  
--but it's never yet been put to test)*

Jimmy got up and went through the gate,  
Tae meet the folks who were telt tae wait ---  
---- for the man who wrote the silly rhymes --  
- about them a' some other time.  
Up here they're a' beyond all strife,  
An' can get on wi' their brand new life.  
Til Jimmy meets them wance again,  
An' blasts them wi the power o' pen.

The Brigadier's there, he's suppin' whisky,  
He can dae it noo an' still stay frisky.  
Och its nae Lang Craigs Brew frae Iain McPhail,  
But holy spirit by the pail.  
A single malt tae mak him fatter,  
Distilled in the Vale, frae Holy Watter.  
It's made here annually, each October,  
An ye can drink a' day an' still stay sober!

Sanny Bennie didnae ken jist whaur he wus,  
In fact he didnae gie a Tinker's Curse.  
Heaven or Hell it was a' the same,  
He wondered, this time, who's to blame?  
Tae ask this man, who'd' nae real faith,  
An' mak him think, "What's after death?"  
He thought that; if he was in heaven,  
He would, at very least, be given,  
A single malt tae ease the strain  
And if he'd been sent tae Hell, a glass o' grain!

An' there's Bill Hendry wearin' McLaren Tartan,  
Jist like the times he prowled Dumbarton;  
Chasin' Nanny on Toonend Road,  
Until she vanished *a la mode*.  
Just whaur she went he couldna follow,  
He just heard the screech and hollow,  
An' in his hauns her hame-made shirt,  
He's still hopin' tae meet that winsome flirt.

Willie Caldwell's there, an he's pursuin',  
His penchant for some ither wooin'.  
Nae angel's safe frae his attention,  
E'en Gabriel gets a special mention.  
Ye see; there's nane up here who's a money-grabber,  
Or pass their time wi' idle blabber.  
The women here are squeaky clean,  
In pure white robes they're ayewaes seen,  
So Willie finds he canna lose:  
Och, but he raither still be tendin' coos!

Jim Goldie's oer there wi' his GP's kit,  
Considering why he feels sae fit.  
How can it be he feels sae weel,  
When he's spent a' that time wi' the Deil?  
When his time came, which way'd he go,  
Would he meet up with his lang syne foe?  
But clean livin' was his lifetime goal,  
Here he spends his time at the nineteenth hole!

John H. Glen examines every kist,  
Tae see if it was on the list ---  
--- o' the folk he sent tae hell or glory,  
Each one wi' a different story.  
He wondered if they'd had a fright,  
Wi' his coffin that would self-ignite?  
He'd only made it just tae see,  
If he could save the crematorium fee!

At bools, John Dow and Bill Hendry met,  
The memory o' that is livin' yet,  
(*"For sic a game had ne'er been seen  
Upon Dumbarton's Boolin' Green"*),  
Noo that Shanter Jug was nae great prize ---  
---- 'cause by a fluke, John beat him in the ties  
But that awful jug has since been lost,  
It can't be found, despite the cost.  
Oor Burns Club just cannae find  
Anither o' the same naff kind.

An' there's Tam Turpie, he's on the green again,  
He's safe up here an' free fae pain.  
There's nae need tae cross the touchers here,  
He can play a' day an' needna fear.  
Nae clap o' thunder here is needed,  
The game o' bools is unimpeded,  
For his opponent here won't be Auld Cloutie,  
Tam's game o' bools is a thing o' beauty.

But try as he might, where're he'd look  
(an' he searched in every heevenly neuk)  
Jim couldna' fin' that piper rough,  
Who's pipes were "*dainty, auld and teuch*",  
Nae sign there was o' Piper Rory  
(Each year oor Burns Club sings his story,)  
So Murphy must be doon below  
Where a' those Hellish Pipers go!

Auld Jimmy stops tae check the time,  
An' wonders if he could maybe find,  
The Old Farts frae 'Friday Night'.  
Are they here, or are they oot o' sight?  
He hopes they'll meet, just so they might,  
Set the heavenly world tae right!  
Discussin' plans o' each politic party  
(They're never clear an' ayewaes clarty,)  
Milliband, Cameron or even Nick Clegg,  
Would a' be taken doon a peg!

And then he paused and had a thought,  
He felt that perhaps he aught --  
--- to look up some o' Rabbie's cronies,  
Tae see if they're here, or is that baloney?  
Could he really meet wi' Holy Willie,  
An' Souter Johnnie, or is that jist plain silly?  
Could it be that Highlan' Mary ---  
--- is waitin' there - noo I fin' that scary!  
An' I'm thinkin' too, wi honest candour  
*"Did Clarinda meet Sylvander?"*

But then Jimmy's thinking, "*Who'll be next --*  
--- *to be targets for my rhyming text*".  
But the victims for this heavenly batch,  
Are still on earth, and that's the catch!  
He'll have tae wait for the old fell Reaper,  
Tae send them up - though 'doon' is cheaper!  
Puir Jimmy's plans he cannae sate,  
E'n here he finds he'll have tae wait --  
--- tae see for whom he'll write his spiel,  
And who'll go doon, tae join the deil!

But whoever Jim decides to rhyme,  
Will have to wait another time.  
For then, my bedside telephone  
Disturbed my dreaming of this poem,  
It tolled the knell of parting night  
And woke me up wi' sic a fright.  
The man, himsel', was on the line  
*"Could I call on him at hauf past nine?"*  
Good Lord, ah nearly peed the bed  
There's naething wrang wi' Auld Hempstead!

( This last verse, obviously only applies after Jimmy's demise)

But, sad tae say I spoke too soon,  
The news is oot, a' roon the toon.  
Auld Jimmy's deid, this much I know  
For the Lennox told me so!  
He's gone tae meet wi' his mentor Rab  
He'll then sit doon wi' him an' gab.  
So raise your glass wi' me an' toast  
The man we know we'll miss the most  
The "Royal Summons" we'll get nae mair  
"Tae Jimmy, a cheil beyond compare!