

Oran do Aonghas Brocair
A Song to Angus the Fox-hunter

Air Fonn/To the tune of "Faigh a nuas dhuinn am botul".

This song was composed by Alexander MacDonald of Geelong, Victoria, Australia and the words were published in the Oban Times on 11th June 1898. The note at the end of the poem says "The subject of the verses was, for many years prior to 1852, an itinerant fox-hunter, well known in Skye, Moidart and Arisaig. He died in Victoria, Australia, more than thirty years ago" (i.e before 1868). The poem was recovered by Jean Cameron from the Oban Times and Gordon Barr has translated it and slightly modernised the Gaelic spelling of the published version.

Deoch-slàint' Aonghas Bhrocair,
Cuir an nochd i mun cuairt,
Agus òl i le socair
Gun sprochd no gun ghruaim;
Sàr shealgair an t-sionnaich
Ga chumail bhon uan,
Bhiodh fùdar ri theine
Agus peileir tro chluais.

Good health, Angus the Hunter. Tonight put it around and drink it at ease with no dejection or any gloom. You are a real hunter of foxes keeping them away from lambs, and there would be powder on fire and bullets through their ears.

Mo sheann Aonghais Bhrocair,
Nì mi nochda dhut duan,
Ged is duilich leam aithris
Laidh smal air do shnuadh;
Thug an aois bhuaat do mhaise,
Tha claisean nad ghruaidh,
Tha do cheum dol nas maille,
'S nas taine do ghruag.

My old Angus the Hunter, I will make a poem for you tonight, although a recitation will be difficult for me, and it will lay down a dark spot on your appearance. Age has taken beauty away from you. There are streaks in your cheeks. Your steps are going more slowly and your hair is thinner.

Se bhi d' fhaicinn san fhàsach
An àite nan gleann
Gun abhag gun mhual-chù
Dh' fhàg cianail mo rann;
Thu bhi giùlain do ghunna
'S an sionnach air chall,
'S cha bu diù leat bhi froiseadh
Nam Possum thar chrann.

It was seeing you in the wilderness, in the glens area with no terriers or greyhounds, that has made my verses sad. You would be busy carrying your gun and the fox lost, and it was not the worst for you to be casting seeds of the Possums before the tree/ mast/ bar/ crane/ rig/ saltire (?).

Cha bu diù leat mo riar,
Cha be riarachadh d' fheadhail,
'S ann a chleachd thu bhi fiadhach
An coire riabhach a' cheò;
A bhi 'cosd do chuid fùdair
Ri udlaich 's ri geòidh,
A bhi marbhadh nam fìor-eun
'S iad mìle 's na neòil.

My satisfaction with you was not the least. Your flesh was not a satisfaction. How you used to be wild in a drab misty corrie, to be squandering your lot of powder on old stags and geese and to be killing the eagles, and them a thousand in the clouds.

Ged a tha thu 'sa choille,
Se bu toigh leat an tolm
Far an cluinneadh tu 'n coileach
'S an doire bheag ghorm,
Agus deileann do chuileanan
Guinideach borb
A's a' chàirn cur na bèist
Air an èireadh an colg.

Cha bu ghealtair 's an oidh' thu,
Ach saighdear gu leòir,
Ged a chruinnicheadh do nàimhdean
Le foill aig an Stòr
Ann riochd nan cat fiadhaich
Le diabhuil aig mòd,
Cha robh bana-bhuidseach riamh dhiubh,
Chuir fiacail air d' fheadil..

Eadar Rubha Aird-ic-Eòlain
Agus sgòrnan a' Chaoil,
'S ann à fearann nan Leòdach
Thug gach seòrsa dhut gaol;
Chuirteadh furan is fàilt ort
'S gach àite le aoidh,
Anns a' chaisteal a b' àirde
'N taigh àiridh an fhraoich.

Ged a thilleadh tu dhachaigh
Gu d' aitreabh 's gu d' thìr,
'S ann bu chianail leat tachairt
An clachan no 'n cill;
Cha chluinneadh tu Gàidhlig
An sraid am Portrigh,
Ceòl cruinneag am buaile,
No nuallan na pìob.

Although you are in the woodland, it is the
hillock that you would like, where you would
hear cocks in the little blue thicket and sharp
barking of your puppies, raging and ready to
attack and able to make the beasts into a
mound after stirring up their rage.

You were not a coward during the night, but
quite a soldier. Although your enemies would
meet you at the Stòr with deceit and in the
shape of wild cats and like a devil at a meeting,
there was never among them a witch who
could put their teeth to your flesh.

Between Aird-ic-Eòlain Point and the narrows
of Kyle, there is the land of the MacLeods
where every person gave love to you.
Hospitality and welcome would be put to you
with generosity in every place, both in the
highest castle and in a heather shieling house.

Although you would return home to your
dwelling and your land, how sad for you is
what has happened in the hamlet or the
graveyard. You would not hear Gaelic in the
streets in Portree, nor a song from a lass in a
fold, or a lament on the pipe.