

For several years, McLaughlin College at York University has held a celebration on January 25, the birthday of Scots poet Robbie Burns (1759-1796). In addition to the traditional haggis, neeps (turnips) and tatties (potatoes), and a free glass of whisky to anyone who comes in a kilt, the College holds a poetry contest. In the last few years, I have contributed to the evening (outside of the contest) a piece of irreverent verse on some political subject. The tradition honours McLaughlin's including the study of public policy in its mandate, as well as Burns' practice of writing short (often critical) poems about political actors and events of his day. "A Stable Genius" was this year's offering. – Robert Drummond

A Stable Genius
(or Don't Scare the Horses)

A busy year has come and gone since Trump's inauguration.
It's time to ask, "How have we done? How fares the US nation?"
Obamacare is still the law; the Wall has not been started.
But Trump cannot admit a flaw; he will not be downhearted.

Employment's up, the markets high. No need for any drama.
(But how much credit to our guy and how much to Obama?)
Trump's filled the courts with judges "right;" conservatives are happy.
All that's "left" are vacancies, and those he'll fill right snappy.

He's cut the regulations now curtailing greenhouse gasses,
And drillers in the Arctic are rewarded with free passes.
He'll have no faith in climate change, 'til palm trees grow in Fargo,
Or 'til he sees the icebergs on the beach at Mar-a-Lago.
But meanwhile storms unusual are seen in California
And snow in Alabama too, I shouldn't have to warn ya.

Trump missed the first Korean War; he may want to repeat it.
But if this time it's nuclear, we all may need to beat it.
Into shelters from the bombs – a futile move, I fear.
For once the H-bombs start to fall, the world won't last a year.

Trump doesn't think trade deals we have are worth a thing at all,
But surely free trade's better than a world that's in free fall.
If NAFTA goes, the auto trade will almost surely suffer,
If any deal is to be made, we hope Trump's just a bluffer.

The Russia probes are still in play; they'll go on sure as shootin'
But Trump's not worried while he knows they can't subpoena Putin.
He doesn't seem to care a lot when critics doubt his fitness;
And "Stormy" scandals get no thought, so long as there's no witness.

“I’m not obese, he proudly says; I’m really an inch taller.”
(No need to measure round his waist or even his shirt collar.)
“I’ve studied at the best of schools. I’ve taken many courses.
I am a stable genius.” (Perhaps we’ll ask the horses).

But here tonight we jest and laugh to keep ourselves from weeping
And hope a higher power still will have us in her keeping.
And if the haggis still is hot and whisky keeps on flowing,
We’ll all resolve to worry not and keep the party going.
In memory of th’immortal bard, we’ll toast the lads and lasses
And though the times are seeming hard, we hope to have full glasses.