

express joy in the elemental passions, but rather because they are supremely 'tuneful.' They enter the heart readily and spring naturally and inevitably to the tongue for utterance in music, just as the present-day popular airs and melodies instantly catch the ear and are whistled in the streets. The tunefulness of Burns' songs, which is their perennial charm, was secured for them by their having been made in a homely way to music (*i. e.*, rhythm) itself.

We have authority to show that in his own way Burns employed as the chief aid to poetical composition the rhythmical dummy. His biographer, Blackie, asserts that when the mood for poetical composition came upon the poet he would quietly leave his fireside, and lying down upon the sward, would 'croon' over an 'air,' which was for Burns the source both of the poetic idea and of its form.* When his mind had thus become thoroughly burdened with a theme and its form, the poet, still crooning an air, would re-enter the house, and taking up ink and paper would write his verses to the living melody as it sang itself out in his heart and imagination. Noteworthy, however, is the fact that, as his biographer states, Burns' ear was not sensitive to melodic intervals: his crooning was not singing as such. So that, it appears, his inspiration was nothing more than the bare sense of a rhythmical lilt. But once under its influence, thought,

* See also Carlyle, *ESSAY ON BURNS*, for practically the same story.