

Lochgilphead (Poetry Sample)

Poor Campbell was all skin and bone,
And living off a waning loan,
When at last I returned to Lochgilphead.

His eyes lit up, and we embraced,
He took my arm, and we made haste,
Under an ashen sky, for Lochgilphead.

I remember that night, ten years ago,
When the midges chewed me from head to toe.
When Campbell and I had to crouch beside
A fading fire, and the rustling tide
Of ancient Loch Gilp, Campbell's second home,
Around which he loved to play and to roam.
We toasted the shadows of Lochgilphead!

He dragged me to his favourite pub,
Ten pints down, he began to blub,
He wept, in the remains of Lochgilphead.

He told me they'd murdered his town,
He told me, through a beery frown,
About the soulless rape of Lochgilphead.

That someone, somewhere, by a twist of fate,
Had left Campbell's pub in this current state:
New carpet; new bogs; a new, gleaming bar.
Indeed, when Campbell looked both near and far,
A ravishing newness had changed his home.
I looked at Campbell, all grey skin and bone.
A man now out of place in Lochgilphead.

They've cleaned the pubs, and built hotels,
Now countless tourists come to dwell
Like ravenous midges, in Lochgilphead.

Through teary eyes, poor Campbell told
How The Comm had been closed and sold.
The newness was gobbling Lochgilphead!

I remember that week, ten years ago,
When the midges chewed me from head to toe.
The cold nights spent in Campbell's Father's Shack,
Upon a shrinking farm, the sky was black

As the waters of Loch Gilp. Poor Campbell
Slept soundly then, the shadows helped to quell
The demons that plagued him in Lochgilphead!

We downed our drinks, then travelled back
To the confines of Campbell's shack,
Where he hid in the fog of Lochgilphead.

His threadbare carpet was still there,
The filthy stove; walls brown and bare,
Bare as the night sky above Lochgilphead!

Campbell lived alone, his father had died,
Murdered by the drink, and the banks that lied,
Saddling Campbell with a debt that grew
As his hairline shrank. Campbell had a view
Of Loch Gilp, sprawled beneath the starless sky.
There were crates of beer that he'd piled high,
He grabbed a can and toasted Lochgilphead!

I did the same; we sipped warm beers,
Whilst Campbell quickly dried his tears,
Rambling bitterly about Lochgilphead.

We drank and we drank and we drank,
Then slept in Campbell's room so rank.
Campbell snored, fitfully, in Lochgilphead.

I remember those days, ten years ago,
When the midges chewed me from head to toe,
Lethargic afternoons beside the Loch,
Damp mornings; nights spent drying sodden socks
By Campbell's crackling fire. Mushrooms on toast
For breakfast: strolls on the desolate Coast
Of Kilmory beach, hollow, hanging heads
After blurry nights, drunk in Lochgilphead.

About The Poem

I was inspired to write *Lochgilphead* after a series of trips to Scotland. During these various trips, several of which were attempts to produce films set in the Scottish countryside, I ended up staying with an old friend, in a small cabin on the outskirts of his family's land. This cabin was very cosy, but completely cut off from almost any form of civilization, especially as the pair of us were reliant on another friend of ours who drove to be able to pick up groceries (and booze) for our strange getaway. I found myself growing deeply enamoured by the Scottish countryside. During one of these trips, my friend and I visited Lochgilphead. My friend was very bitter about how several

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pubs that he once knew as a small child had been gentrified, and he sardonically remarked about how this was ruining his nostalgia for the town. The themes of nostalgia, social isolation, and reunion came together in the central narrative of *Lochgilphead*.

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