

## Last Thoughts of Robert 1<sup>st</sup> of Scotland (Abridged)

Oh faither- do you have one last favour left, eh?  
I struggle to start now  
when we spoke so often then. Remember  
how I pled upon my knees  
while the seas outside whispered  
your part on the rocks  
and hissing sands. You'd stand  
at the cavemouth dressed as the day  
and say "*Get up, get on*"  
and I your faithful son  
would pledge you futures  
I did not own as holy *weregeld*,  
a beggar-prince who'd sown  
his seeds in the fallow ground  
of hallowed land long before.

When Comyn joined scripture  
there upon your altar they painted me  
apostate with his blood  
but even then you forgave your son  
the excommunication of a petty pope  
and said "*Get up, get on*" just loud enough  
in the whisper of pages  
for Lamberton to make a king.

When I raised the lands to you in flame  
becoming lord of blackened glens  
fled by harrowed folk again  
you forbearing said "*Get up, get on*"  
though quieter then, your meaning bound  
in smoke lifting from scorched hills.

At Bannockburn you saw DeBoon  
and the axe-head that split  
the silver spoon fed mouth  
of a man-child come to kill a king  
then said nothing though a kingdom  
was made. I thought us sundered there  
and your long silence since a faither's ire  
but now on this leper's bed I wonder  
whether silence was your true voice all along

and violence mine so that,  
as the tallow flicker of this life palls  
alone in the dark I begging call  
for a sign that any of this was right at all.

**Ross McWhinnie**