

The Bogle by W. D. Cocker

There's a bogle by the bour-tree at the lang loan heid,
I canna thole the thocht o him, he fills ma hert wi dreid;
He skirls like a hoolet, an he rattles aa his banes,
An gies himsel an unco fash to fricht wee weans.

He's never there by daylight, but ance the gloamin faas
He creeps along the heid-rig, an through the tattie shaws,
Syne splairges through the burn, an comes sprachlin ower the stanes
Then coories doun ahint the dyke to fricht wee weans.

I canna say I've seen him, an it's no that I am blin,
But, whenever I pass the bour-tree, I steek ma een an rin;
An though I get a tummle whiles I'd rather thole sic pains,
Than look upon the likes o yon that frichts wee weans.

I daurna gang that gait ma lane by munelicht or by mirk,
Oor Tam's no feart, but then he's big; an strang as ony stirk;
He says the bogle's juist the win that through the bour-tree maens.
The muckle gowk! It's no the win that frichts wee weans.

Learning Resources

Reading

Read the poem and listen to the audio file.

If there are unfamiliar words, try to work out what they mean according to their context, or look them up using a Scots dictionary – you can use an online Scots dictionary at www.dsl.ac.uk.

Analysis

The main theme of the poem is the fear in the small child's mind.

1. Write down the phrases that tell you the child is scared.
2. Now listen to the poem again. Find other ways this idea of fear is developed.
3. What does the use of the expression 'the likes o yon' suggest about the bogle? Why do you think the writer chose to use this phrase?

Setting

1. What time of day does all the trouble start? Why do you think this is a particularly eerie time?
2. Create a detailed black and white drawing of the setting.

Character

Choose the words that describe:

1. the child;
2. the bogle.

hardy	imaginative	mischievous	unsure	confident
gullible	threatening	brave	determined	cowardly