

The First Hoolit's Prayer by Ian McFadyen

"A'll tak the nicht-shift," says the hoolit.

"The nicht-shift suits me fine –
An i the deeps o winter
A'll aye dae the overtime.

"Dinna send me wi thae ithir birds
cheepin in a choir
i the gloamin or at brek o day
lined up oan a wire.

"But gie tae me a solo pairt,
markin oot the nicht wi low notes that gie goose-pricks
an hie anes that gie frichts.

"An Lord, dinna pey me
wi nuts or crumbs or seeds:
A want tae be carnivorous,
an chow aff rottans' heids!"

Learning Resources

Reading

1. What does the owl mean by, 'A'll tak the nicht-shift'?
2. What evidence is there to show that the owl likes to be on their own?
3. Why might the owl wish to make a noise that gives 'goose-pricks'?
4. Does the owl seem like a pleasant creature? Why?
5. Define the following Scots words:

gloaming

anes

rottans