

## The Hen's Lament by Sheena Blackhall

It's nae delight tae be a hen  
Wi clooks an claws an caimb  
Reestin wi the rottans  
In a hen-hoose for a hame.

Nae sunner div I settle doon  
My clutch o bairns tae hatch  
The fairm-wife come – a scraunin pest –  
She cowps me aff me cosy nest  
A tarry-fingert vratch.

Jist lately, though, she's changed her tune –  
Ma plaitie's piled wi corn.  
“Sup up, ma bonnie quine,” says she,  
“We're haein broth the morn!”

## 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](http://www.dsl.ac.uk).

### Understanding

1. Why does the hen feel like she normally has a difficult life?
2. What has happened recently to improve the hen's life?
3. What is going to happen to the hen next?

### Language

1. Define the following Scots words:  
a. cowp                      b. bonnie                      c. quine
2. 'The word 'quine' is normally used in a specific part of Scotland. Which part?

### Creating

Choose one of the following activities:

- A. Write a poem from the fairm-wife's point of view, telling us about your plans for the hen.
- B. Create a storyboard showing the events in this poem.