

Janet Horne ;
 The alleged Dornoch Witch
 burnt to death , 1722

Old and Weary .
 Befuddled , leary ,
 Frail , and Friendless,
 sad ,poverty's child;
 eyes looking wild .

Janet Horne , Old Forlorn ,
 So long in Italy employed ,
 returned to Dornoch , employer's decree ,
 This old crone , sent back home .
 Janet's daughter , born with con-joined finger ,
 public discussion , a Witches daughter !

Worthy , Church people all ,
 Brave in full attendance ,
 And presuming they held the right ,
 Took this ancient woman to task ..
 And those worthy souls , devised a test ,
 A test simply chosen , Janet to quote the
 Lord's Prayer in Gaelic .

Janet's many years in Italy , her Gaelic
 probably most forgot ,
 She did very well , but got two words wrong ,
 The Elders , and the great and good ,
 condemned her , as they surely would !

Crows wheeled in Dornoch's skies , sea gulls screamed
 around the beach , fresh blew the wind in from the sea ,
 and the baying crowd ..drinking in their moment of power ,
 exulting in their primordial lusts .

Guilty of Witchcraft the verdict
 said ,
 the Crowd were here to see her burnt
 to death.
 Were they dressed in their sunday best ,
 These Church elders , and the rest ?

" A bonny fire" , cried out Janet ,
 Little did she know , she'd be
 Thrust in it .
 Poor Janet Horne must have
 regretted being born
 It was her unfortunate lot ,
 By the Almighty to be forgot .
 A young boy who was at the fatal
 scene ,
 In old age , recounted he'd never heard
 a more terrible scream !

When I walk by the place where this dreadful event took place , my imagination
 floods with images of the baying crowd ..the shouts , " Come from far" .. Vile witch ,
 most troublesome bitch" The stench of burning flesh and tar ...All took place in this
 most delightful spot ...

Has there ever been a service of atonement or statement of contrition for this
 frightful deed by the Church ?

One reads of the facts stated blandly , even the dated stone 1722 is reckoned to be in
 error The young boy's statement was recorded in a newspaper when he was very old .
 My regret is that my poor effort presenting the terrible affair is so weak

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