

Kinloch, David

David Kinloch's most recent Carcanet collection is 'In My Father's House' (2005). A past founding editor of Verse magazine, he is currently Reader in English at the University of Strathclyde'. His website is www.davidkinloch.co.uk

BRAVEHEART

O Mel! Mel of the hair extenders! Braveheart!
 O Mad Mac Mel! It is I,
 Walt, Walt Whitman, who salutes you.
 When I heard at the close of the day
 That your heroic film of the Wallace
 Would premiere in Stirling, I floated

From Mount Florida, high above Glasgow, floated
 From the residence of my comrade Kinloch, a brave heart
 Like you, I crossed the hummock-land of Shotts as Wallace
 Did on leaving Elderslie, I
 Sped through that dun-coloured upland (beside the great M8) that day
 To celebrate your epic but most of all to be with you

O Mel! But also to petition you,
 Dark singer of Democracy, you who floated
 Like a Moses through Scottish bogs, waiting for the day
 To release your noble, simple people, their brave brave heart
 Clasped in an English vice. O Mel, I
 Confuse you, mix you in my mind with Wallace.

And who could blame me? For you and Wallace
 Commingle in my scented breast, you
 Two and I, comrades all, shooting the film of liberty I
 Crave above all else, I crave and lost as my successors floated
 Back up stream to a land of villanelles and sonnets. Bravehearts!
 Brave Walt! a bearded Ariel imprisoned in a bad sestina who would this
 day

Be free again by your example, free today
 To live today, to sing the love of comrades as Wallace
 Did. He could not rhyme, his only beat the braveheart
 Quad-pumping the eclectic plaid about his knees (What knees!). You
 Saw him Mel, as clearly as I see you who floated
 From Australia via Hollywood to this premiere. I

Name the perfumed guests as they arrive, I
 Shake the manly hand of Jodie Foster, day
 Dream as Christian Slater -he of the slow doe-eyes- floats
 In. We sit transfixed as the credits of your Wallace
 Roll but I have eyes alone for you,
 Peach of a biceps -your musk white thighs- muncher of power-breakfasts,
 Braveheart!

Mel Wallace, Will Gibson, this day
 Your barbaric yawp injects its braveheart
 Into me. You and I floating and free.