

## NOTES ON SCOTS ORTHOGRAPHY

The system of spelling Scots used in these poems closely follows the *Recommendations for Writers in Scots* published by the Scots Language Society in *LALLANS* 24, 1985. On the basis of this system, it is possible to deduce the pronunciation of nearly every specifically Scots word from its spelling. Notable exceptions are the words, *he* and *she*, which are pronounced with a modified vowel in Scots, as *hay* and *shay*.

In this system, with a few exceptions, each vowel or digraph represents one sound in Scots. The troublesome 'ea' digraph is largely replaced 'ae', 'ai' or 'ei' as appropriate, and the 'ee' and 'oo' digraphs borrowed from English are largely replaced by 'ei' and 'ou', respectively. However, in this particular text, the 'oo' digraph is retained in place of 'ou' in a few words, such as 'oor, about, oor and soond, to avoid confusion with English pronunciation. The 'ui' digraph, wherever it occurs, represents the modified 'o' sounds, as in, *guid, ruif, huik, fuil, luim, duin, muin, stuipit, puir, uise, uiss, buit* and *luiv*.

The diphthong in words such as, *wynd* (alley), *byde, wyfe, dyke, byle and styte*, is invariably represented by the letter, 'y', although the different diphthong in *five*, is pronounced as in English. The letter, 'i' is used for the short vowel in *finnd, blinnd* and *shilpit* (*puny*). To actors unfamiliar with spoken Scots, it will be necessary to remember that 'i' is generally short, that final 'ie' (as in *flie, gie, grie* and *hie*) is pronounced as in 'see', and that 'ou' is pronounced as in French, whenever it appears in the text. However, the system is consistent and once the reader is familiar with it, should present few difficulties.