

## BIG BAD WOLF

Originally, this was written for an Equality event. I wanted to take an unusual angle at who decides who we can love. How Society or family can try to control. I wanted to kick back against that.

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## BIG BAD WOLF

I'm in love with a big bad wolf  
It's causing a bit of a fuss,  
but when I saw him on Tinder  
I knew he was the one;  
there was nothing left to discuss.

My brothers say I should dump him,  
or they'll jump him.  
Send him back up north.  
They'll get me someone from around here,  
a local lad,  
one of us.  
I will get over my wolf;  
in the end I'll be glad.

Sod that.

He's my tall dark stranger,  
ripped, great muscle tone.  
My Mr Darcy, my Bond,  
no baggage, lives alone.  
(I checked)  
I love that he's tuned into nature,  
addicted to danger.  
Likes to life on the edge  
...of a forest.

When I first heard his voice,  
a symphony of gravelly tones  
all low and wild;  
vibrated right through me,  
melted my bones.

I really don't care  
about the comments or warnings.  
I like he isn't your average guy  
and I certainly don't believe  
that he's a serial

... dater.

He says we should embrace our uniqueness,  
ignore the haters.  
This attraction can't be wrong,  
It's far too strong.

Like, when his big brown eyes  
scan my body with desire  
and his guitar-ready nails  
rake my thighs.  
'Oh! I could eat you up', he sighs.  
Well, my back arches and my lips  
pucker and I whisper into his elegant ear,  
'you are a Big. Bad. Wolf.'

I love to run my fingers through  
his long auburn tresses.  
I even accept that *occasionally*  
he likes to wear old women dresses,  
but his scent is all male  
and I'm in the middle  
of my own fairy tale.

Oh! What the heck!  
He's my **Big. Bad. Wolf.**

## RABBIE'S LASS

I was asked to take part in an alternative Burns night where the poetry was to be from the point of view of the women in Robert Burns's life. To research this, I went to Mauchline and met with some amazing locals, got a tour of the graveyard and persuaded a church elder to let me see the actual church register for Jean Armour and Burns wedding. One thing is very clear from the signatures. Burns did not really want to be there. His signature is very shaky, Jean's, confident. I hadn't appreciated that Jean Armour had twins before she married Burns. The following poem evolved.

I usually don't give the title when performing this and men and women can have strong reactions to it. The theme seems to be just as relevant today.

## RABBIE'S LASS

You say it is over.  
Two children a burden.  
Marrying young a mistake.  
Marrying me a high risk stake.

You say that it is you, not me.  
You shouldn't have taken that step.  
You reacted badly  
to a crisis: What, all three?  
Or is it just two children and me?

You say that it is you, not this.  
Not this you want.  
Not the life once dreamt.  
Wrote of at nineteen,  
now a prison at twenty-eight.

You need to be free.  
Grubby hands a weight  
stopping you from flying,  
pulling you down,  
down into nothingness.

You say that you must go.  
Leave behind this life.  
Discard the skin,  
your kin;  
you know there is more.

You say that it is you not me.

Not the twin scars across my belly;  
you have to go.  
Find the lost vocabulary of adults.  
Search within the lines,  
for that is where your heart lies.  
Not with me.

Not this red, red rose  
faded to a blush.  
I should cut you free.

You are a bastard.

You were abandoned,  
lost, before I found you  
within your words.  
Now you run;  
do not recognise love.  
Not even that written  
on the hand of your child.

You were denied,  
now you deny us.  
You have turned the wheel,  
found the notch  
that opens the gate.  
You can see your path

Go

But, remember this;  
you will never be free.  
There are still  
two children and me.

## KEENING

I arrived to work in Ethiopia not realising that I was entering a civil war with all that brings. Curfews, road blocks, phone tapping, army patrols. I was isolated from home and when I got a phone call, something that took a lot of planning on my mum's part to get through, it was with distressing news. The day continued to unravel into horror.

## KEENING

They took me to a public place.  
The most public in Addis.  
Confident that I would assume control.  
Stop sobbing. Not crying.  
That was too timid a word.

The Hilton bar was busy.  
Diplomats and journalists hiding from the war.  
They would not tolerate anyone disturbing their peace.  
Here I would sit quietly.

My reaction to her death was unexpected.  
I was a novice with grief.  
To others her death had been in plain sight,  
but not to me, a thousand lives away.  
I had loved her.  
The aunt who had jived through her war.  
My oasis in a fraught family.  
My Hilton.

Now I hold the knowledge.  
Now those that listen  
into my phone calls  
hold the knowledge.  
I live my days guarding my words.  
Tonight, I guard my emotions.

Curfew threatens and we leave.  
Walk to their Ex-pat apartment.  
I stand on the balcony, wrapped in night,  
craving its moist, earthy, warmth.  
One that she now embraces.

And I hear the words echo from  
her graveside in a Scottish woodland.

Claithe'd in the clarty, mockit and mired.  
Aw the airth and tae the airth ye shall abide

A lament cuts through the night.  
A cat keening its defiance into the curfew.  
A unique sound rising from the pavements below  
bathed in low Sodium light; bright enough for the army patrols.  
Bright enough to shoot by.  
Huddled against the concrete, cardboard barricades built  
at dusk hold their human packages tucked up for the night.

So not a cat.  
A girl.  
Mewing.  
Too timid a word for rape.

On the streets, defying the army,  
I kick him off the child.

In this place;  
one hidden from the public,  
I have control of my grief.