***It has been suggested that this poem was composed by Robert Burns in 1795 when he wrote that he was enduring "the delightful sensations of an omnipotent Toothache, while fifty troops of infernal spirits are riding past from ear to ear along my jawbones." It was first published in the Belfast News Letter of 11th September 1797. Despite the pain, the poet manages to maintain his sense of humour!***

**Address to the Toothache**

My curse upon your venom'd stang.  
That shoots my tortur'd gums alang,  
An thro my lug gies monie a twang <br   >Wi gnawing vengeance,  
Tearing my nerves wi bitter pang,  
   Like racking engines!

A' down my beard the slavers trickle,  
I throw the wee stools o'er the mickle.  
While round the fire the giglets keckle,  
   To see me loup.  
An raving mad, I wish a heckle  
   Were i' their doup!

When fevers burn, or ague freezes,  
Rheumatics gnaw, or colic squeezes,  
Our neebors sympathise to ease us,  
   Wi pitying moan;  
But thee! - thou hell o a' diseases -  
   They mock our groan!

Of a' the numerous human dools -  
Ill-hairsts, daft bargains, cutty-stools,  
Or worthy frien's laid i' the mools,  
   Sad sight to see!  
The tricks o knaves, or fash o fools -  
   Thou bear'st the gree!

Whare'er that place be priests ca' Hell,  
Whare a' the tones o misery yell,  
An ranked plagues their numbers tell,  
   In dreadfu raw,  
Thou, Toothache, surely bear'st the bell,  
   Amang them a'!

O thou grim, mischief-making chiel,  
That gars the notes o discord squeel,  
Till human kind aft dance a reel  
   In gore, a shoe-thick,  
Gie a' the faes o Scotland's weal  
   A towmond's toothache!

*Meaning of unusual words:*  
stang=sting  
lug=ear  
twang=twinge  
slavers=saliva  
mickle=armchair  
giglets keckle=girls cackle  
loup=jump  
heckle=comb with steel teeth for dressing flax and hemp  
doup=backside  
dools=woes  
Ill-hairsts=bad harvests  
daft=mad  
cutty-stools=stool of repentance on which offendors sat in church  
mools=crumbling earth  
6738bear'st the gree=takes the prize  
raw=row  
chiel=fellow, child  
gars=makes  
gie=give  
faes=foes  
towmond=twelve month's