

Look to the skies on Burns Night

The alignment of the planets this month has been discussed at length, but nowhere more lyrically than by the Scottish Poetry Library where poets have gathered their thoughts on the celestial occurrence.

This month six of the planets, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune will all be visible in the same part of the night sky – and at least four of them will be visible with only the naked eye while stargazers might need binoculars or a telescope to see Uranus and Neptune more clearly.

All of the poems are written in Scots as befitting a Burns Night project – and that penned by new Scots Makar, Peter MacKay is written in Gaelic.

Poets love to look at the stars and the night skies for inspiration. These poems are said to “trawl the night skies with speculation and awe”.

Kevin Williamson, Communications Manager at the Scottish Poetry Library, said: “Hearing the distinct and expressive auld Scots tongue wax lyrical at the cutting edge of astronomical and scientific discovery is a wonder and a joy. These poems lift our gaze skyward and our imagination to the heavens while celebrating this rare planetary alignment.

“Whether it is Kathleen Jamie serenading Sirius “the dug stern”, Peter MacKay’s thoughts on the dwarf planet Pluto or

Stephen Watt taking a look at Miranda, a moon of Uranus, there is so much to explore.

“And let us not forget that the birth of Robert Burns in January 1759 coincided with a rare astronomical appearance of Halley’s Comet in the sky.”

The full galaxy of heavenly-wrought poems can be found [here](#).

[Read Philip Daly’s account of the night sky over Edinburgh for January here.](#)





Peter MacKay, Scottish Makar