

To A Louse by Robert Burns

(On seeing one on a lady's bonnet at church)

Ha! whare ye gaun, ye crowlin ferlie!
Your impudence protects you sairly:
I canna say but ye strunt rarely
Owre gauze and lace;
Tho' faith, I fear ye dine but sparely
On sic a place.

Ye ugly, creepin, blastit wonner,
Detested, shunned by saunt an' sinner,
How daur ye set your fit upon her,
Sae fine a lady!
Gae somewhere else and seek your
dinner,
On some poor body.

Swith, in some beggar's haffet squattle;
There ye may creep, and sprawl, and
sprattle
Wi' ither kindred, jumpin cattle,
In shoals and nations;
Whare horn or bane ne'er daur unsettle
Your thick plantations.

Now haud ye there, ye're out o' sight,
Below the fatt'rels, snug an' tight;
Na faith ye yet! ye'll no be right
Till ye've got on it,
The vera tapmost, towering height
O' Miss's bonnet.

My sooth! right bauld ye set your nose
out,
As plump an' grey as onie grozet:
O for some rank, mercurial rozet,
Or fell, red smeddum,
I'd gie ye sic a hearty dose o't,
Wad dress your droddum!

I wad na been surprised to spy
You on an auld wife's flainen toy;
Or aiblins some bit duddie boy,
On's wyliecoat;
But Miss's fine Lunardi! -fie!
How daur ye do't?

O Jenny, dinna toss your head,
An' set your beauties a' abroad!
Ye little ken what cursed speed
The blastie's makin!
Thae winks and finger-ends, I dread,
Are notice takin!

O, wad some Power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us
An' foolish notion:
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,
And ev'n Devotion!

TRANSLATION OF TO A LOUSE by Robert Burns

Ha! Where are you going,
you crawling marvel?
Your impudence protects you sorely,
I cannot say but you strut rarely
Over gauze and lace,
Though faith! I fear you dine but sparely
On such a place

You ugly, creeping, blasted wonder,
Detested, shunned by saint and sinner,
How dare you set your foot upon her -
So fine a lady!
Go somewhere else and seek your
dinner
On some poor body

Off! in some beggar's hovel squat:
There you may creep, and sprawl, and
sprattle,
With other kindred, jumping cattle,
In shoals and nations;
Where horn nor bone never dare
unsettle
Your thick plantations

Now hide you there! You're out of sight,
Below the falderals, snug and tight;
No, faith you yet! you'll not be right,
'Til you've got on it ---
The very topmost, towering height
Of miss's bonnet.

My sooth! right bold you set your nose
out,
As plump and gray as any gooseberry:
O for some rank, mercurial resin,
Or foul red poison,
I'd give you such a hearty dose of it,
Would fix your behind!

I would not be surprised to spy
You on an old wife's flannel cap:
Or maybe some small raggedy boy,
On his under garments;
But Miss's fine Lunardi! fie!
How dare you do it?

O Jenny do not toss your head,
And set your beauties all abroad!
You little know what cursed speed
The bugger's making!
Those winks and finger-ends, I dread,
Are notice taking!

O would some Power the good Lord give
us
To see ourselves as others see us!
It would from many a blunder free us,
And foolish notion:
What airs in dress and gait would leave
us,
And even devotion!