

Robert Burns
To a Louse

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

Ye ugly, creepin, blastit wonner,
Detested, shunn'd 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 hauffet squattle:
There you may creep, and sprawl, and spr
Wi' ither kindred, jumping cattle,
In shoals and nations;
Whare horn nor bane ne'er daur unsettle
Your thick plantations.

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

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

I wad na been surpris'd to spy
You on an auld wife's flainen toy:
Or aiblins some bit duddie boy,
On's wyliecoat;
But Miss's fine Lunardi! fye!
How daur ye do't.

O Jenny, dinna toss your head,
An' set your beauties a' abroad!
You little ken what cursed speed
The blastie's makin!
Thae winks an' 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,
An' ev'n devotion!

Ha! Where are you going, you crawling
wonder?
Your impudence protects you sorely,
I can not say but you swagger rarely
Over gauze and lace,
Though faith! I fear you dine but sparingly
On such a place

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

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

Now hold you there! you are out of sight,
Below the falderals, snug and tight;
No, faith you yet! you will not be right,
Until you have got on it ---
The very topmost, towering height
Of misses bonnet.

My sooth! right bold you set your nose out,
As plump and gray as any gooseberry:
O for some rank, mercurial resin,
Or deadly, red powder,
I would give you such a hearty dose of it,
Would dress your breech!

I would not have been surprised to spy
You on an old wife's flannel cap:
Or maybe some small ragged boy,
On his undervest;
But Miss's fine balloon bonnet! fye!
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 blastie's making!
Those winks and finger-ends, I dread,
Are notice takiing!

O would some Power the gift to 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!