To A Louse
On Seeing One On A Lady's Bonnet, At Church

Ha! whaur 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.

Hey! Where are you going, you creepy crawly?
Your impudence protects you surely;
I cannot say but you swagger rarely,
Over gauze and lace;
Though, faith! I fear you dine but sparely
On such 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.

You ugly, creeping, blasted wonder,
Detested, shunned by saint and sinner,
How dare you set your feet upon her –
So fine a lady?
Go 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, jumping cattle,
In shoals and nations;
Whaur horn nor bane ne'er daur unsettle
Your thick plantations.

Off! on some beggar's temple squat;
There you may creep, and sprawl, and scramble
With other kindred, jumping cattle,
In shoals and nations;
Where horn nor bone (combs) never dare unsettle
Your thick plantations.
Now haud you there, ye're out o' sight,
Below the fatt'rels, snug and tight;
Na, faith ye yet! ye'll no be right,
Till ye've got on it-
The verra tapmost, tow'rin height
O' Miss' bonnet.

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

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

My word! Right bold you set your nose out,
As plump and grey as any gooseberry:
Oh for some rank, mercurial rosin,
Or deadly, red powder (insecticide),
I'd give you such a hearty dose of it,
Would adorn your bottom.

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

I would not be surprised to spy
You on an old wife's flannel cap;
Or perhaps some small ragged boy,
On his flannel vest;
But Miss's fine fancy hat! Good grief!
How dare you do it?
O Jenny, dinna toss your head,
An' set your beauties a' abread!
Ye little ken what cursed speed
The blastie's makin:
Thae winks an' finger-ends, I dread,
Are notice takin.

Oh Jenny, don't toss your head,
And set your curls flying all abroad!
You little know what cursed speed
The beast is making:
Those winks and fingers pointing, I dread,
Are notice taking.

O wad some Power the giftie gie us
To see oursel's as ither's see us!
It wad frae mony a blunder free us,
An' foolish notion:
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,
An' ev'n devotion!

Oh would some Power the gift 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!

-Robert Burns
(translated, with no attempt to keep the rhyme nor meter, by Charlene Wight)