

Third Epistle To J. Lapraik

Guid speed and furder to you, Johnie,
 Guid health, hale han's, an' weather bonie;
 Now, when ye're nickin down fu' cannie
 The staff o' bread,
 May ye ne'er want a stoup o' bran'y
 To clear your head.

May Boreas never thresh your rigs,
 Nor kick your rickles aff their legs,
 Sendin the stuff o'er muirs an' hagg
 Like drivin wrack;
 But may the tapmost grain that wags
 Come to the sack.

I'm bizzie, too, an' skelpin at it,
 But bitter, daudin showers hae wat it;
 Sae my auld stumpie pen I gat it
 Wi' muckle wark,
 An' took my jocteleg an' whatt it,
 Like ony clark.

It's now twa month that I'm your debtor,
 For your braw, nameless, dateless letter,
 Abusin me for harsh ill-nature
 On holy men,
 While deil a hair yoursel' ye're better,
 But mair profane.

But let the kirk-folk ring their bells,
 Let's sing about our noble sel's:
 We'll cry nae jads frae heathen hills
 To help, or roose us;
 But browster wives an' whisky stills,
 They are the muses.

Your friendship, Sir, I winna quat it,
 An' if ye mak' objections at it,
 Then hand in neive some day we'll knot it,
 An' witness take,
 An' when wi' usquabae we've wat it
 It winna break.

But if the beast an' branks be spar'd
 Till kye be gaun without the herd,
 And a' the vittel in the yard,
 An' theekit right,
 I mean your ingle-side to guard
 Ae winter night.

Then muse-inspirin' aqua-vitae
 Shall make us baith sae blythe and witty,
 Till ye forget ye're auld an' gatty,
 An' be as canty
 As ye were nine years less than thretty-
 Sweet ane an' twenty!

But stooks are cowpit wi' the blast,
 And now the sinn keeks in the west,
 Then I maun rin amang the rest,
 An' quat my chanter;
 Sae I subscribe myself' in haste,
 Yours, Rab the Ranter.