

When the Haggis is piped in to the Burns Night Feast on 25th January, the Host stands and reads the great Scottish poet's

Address to a Haggis



Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face,
Great chieftain o' the puddin'-race!
Aboon them a' ye tak your place,
Painch, tripe, or thairm:
Weel are ye wordy o' a grace
As lang's my arm.

The groaning trencher there ye fill,
Your hurdies like a distant hill,
Your pin wad help to mend a mill
In time o' need,
While thro' your pores the dews distil
Like amber bead.

His knife see rustic Labour dight,
An' cut you up wi' ready slight,
Trenching your gushing entrails bright,
Like onie ditch;
And then, O what a glorious sight,
Warm-reekin', rich!

Then, horn for horn, they stretch an' strive:
Deil tak the hindmost, on they drive,
Till a' their weel-swallow'd kytes belyve
Are bent like drums;
The auld Guidman, maist like to rive,
'Bethankit' hums.

Is there that owre his French ragout
Or olio that wad staw a sow,
Or fricassee wad make her spew
Wi' perfect sconner,
Looks down wi' sneering, scornfu' view
On sic a dinner?

Poor devil! see him owre his trash,
As feckless as a wither'd rash,
His spindle shank a guid whip-lash,
His nieve a nit;
Thro' bloody flood or field to dash,
O how unfit!

But mark the Rustic, haggis-fed,
The trembling earth resounds his tread.
Clap in his walie nieve a blade,
He'll make it whistle;
An' legs an' arms, an' heads will sned,
Like taps o' thrissle.

Ye Pow'rs, wha mak mankind your care,
And dish them out their bill o' fare,
Auld Scotland wants nae skinking ware
That jaups in luggies;
But, if ye wish her gratefu' prayer,
Gie her a Haggis!

Handy glossary: *Fair fa'* = good fortune; *sonsie* = pleasant-looking/cheerful; *aboon* = above; *Painch* = stomach/paunch; *thairm* = gut used as skin; *hurdies* = buttocks; *pin* = skewer; *dight* = make ready; *slight* = skill; *onie* = any; *Warm-reekin* = steaming; *Deil* = the Devil; *weel-swallow'd* = very swollen; *kytes* = bellies; *belyve* = quickly; *Guidman* = head of the household/husband; *rive* = burst; *owre* = over; *olio* = a type of Spanish stew; *staw* = to feel sated; *sconner* = revulsion; *feckless* = weak; *rash* = reed; *spindle shank* = thin leg; *nieve* = fist; *nit* = nut; *clap* = caress; *walie* = strong; *sned* = trim; *taps o' thrissle* = tops of thistles; *wha* = who; *skinking ware* = thin, watery food; *jaups* = splashes; *luggies* = wooden dishes with two side handles