

A Bard's Epitaph

IS there a whim-inspirèd fool,
Owre fast for thought, owre hot for rule,
Owre blate to seek, owre proud to snool,
 Let him draw near;
And owre this grassy heap sing dool,
 And drap a tear.

Is there a bard of rustic song,
Who, noteless, steals the crowds among,
That weekly this area throng,
 O, pass not by!
But, with a frater-feeling strong,
 Here, heave a sigh.

Is there a man, whose judgment clear
Can others teach the course to steer,
Yet runs, himself, life's mad career,
 Wild as the wave,
Here pause—and, thro' the starting tear,
 Survey this grave.

The poor inhabitant below
Was quick to learn the wise to know,
And keenly felt the friendly glow,
 And softer flame;
But thoughtless follies laid him low,
 And stain'd his name!

Reader, attend! whether thy soul
Soars fancy's flights beyond the pole,
Or darkling grubs this earthly hole,
 In low pursuit:
Know, prudent, cautious, self-control
 Is wisdom's root.

Robert Burns