

In Praise Of France

By Rosa Johnson

The French are such a generous race, and France has given so much
to Britain and the British, like knickers, beans and such.
French knitting and French cricket, French polish, chalk and bread,
French dressing on the salad and a duvet on the bed.
Praise horns and drains and windows, with all the verve you can,
and I am sure we all adore the jolly onion man.

The French donated cabaret and cherchez la (bonne) femme,
French letters, leave, and mustard, Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme.
For parapluies praises, and other objets d'art
like enigmatic ladies, and ballet at the barre.
Let's praise the can-can dancers, les moules and ormolu,
and praise the jolly onion man for he's no parvenu.

Praise Hugo, Dumas and Bizet, praise Degas and Lautrec,
French romance, wine and roses, Camembert and Pont l'Evêque.
Praise omelettes and l'escargots, Georges Feydeau, French Champagne,
the little singing "Sparrow" (be)'neath the bridges of the Seine.
The famous Foreign Legion, Blondin, Curie, Pasteur,
and the onion man's still calling His tearful cri-de-coeur.

Of course French architecture too deserves a word of praise,
petits fours and mots adopted like pourboire and post-chaise.
Praise chauffeur, gateau, nougat, also the corps de dance,
The Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe, bombardier, bonhomie, bonnes chances.
And praise the onion vendor, beret and bicyclette,
who is for me, a Francophile, a charming French vignette.

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