

The Bourgeoisie (Les Bourgeois)

Paroles de Jacques Brel
Musique de Jean Corti
English version by Tom Lehrer

1. Hearts as light as air,
Eyes and cheeks aglow,
We were twenty, and we had the truth.
With my friend Pierre
And my friend Jojo,
To the bar we'd go to drink our youth.

*[indicates bar and
moves in that direction]*

Pierre thought he was Casanova,
Jojo, Voltaire and Debussy,
[spoken:] And I, who always was the proudest,
I imagined I was ----- me!

From the Grand Hotel the businessmen would leave.
We would greet them as they came along,
Showing them our class,
Showing them our ass,
Singing this song:

*[indicates hotel on
other side of stage]*

The bourgeoisie are really pigs,
They don't get smart, they just get fatter.
The bourgeoisie with all their dough ---
The more they learn, the less they know!

2. Hearts as light as air,
Eyes and cheeks aglow,
We were twenty, and we knew the truth.
With my friend Pierre
And my friend Jojo,
Drunk with beer but even more with youth.

Casanova chased the ladies,
Voltaire wrote songs with Debussy.
[spoken:] And I, who always was the proudest,
I got almost as drunk as --- me!

From the Grand Hotel the lawyers would appear.
We would greet them as they came along.
[affected voice:] Veddy uppah clahss,
Showing them our ahss,
Singing this song:

The bourgeoisie are really pigs,
They don't get smart, they just get fatter.
The bourgeoisie with all their dough ---
They more they learn, the less they know!

[optional: At this point he can change his demeanor so as to indicate the respectability he has acquired over the years. To further indicate the passage of time, perhaps he could make a simple costume adjustment, e.g., change beret for hat, remove scarf to reveal tie, put on glasses, etc.]

3. Hearts no longer dare,
Eyes no longer glow,
At the Grand Hotel we often dine.
The notary, Pierre,
The businessman, Jojo,
And I, the lawyer, talk and sip our wine.

*[indicates hotel and
moves in that direction]*

Pierre may talk of Casanova,
Jojo, Voltaire and Debussy,
[spoken:] And I, who still remain the proudest,
I still talk of --- me!

Later when we leave
From that bar they come,
Scum who ought to stay where they belong.
Clearly lower class,
Showing us their ---- *well!*
Singing that song:

[indicates bar]

[Everyone else on stage sings the chorus at him, tauntingly:]

The --- bour --- geoi --- sie are really pigs,
They don't get smart, they just get fatter.
The bourgeoisie with all their dough,
They more they learn, the less they know!

[He has reacted angrily when they started to sing, and during their song he calls to an unseen offstage policeman:]

[spoken:] Officer! Officer! Arrest these hooligans! They are a public nuisance! We are taxpayers, and we don't need to have these hoodlums bothering us every night. God help the world when this generation grows up! [fading out as he exits] Officer! Officer!

LES BOURGEOIS

lyrics by Jacques Brel

music by Jean Corti

Le cœur bien au chaud, les yeux dans la bière
Chez la grosse Adrienne de Montalant
Avec l'ami Jojo, et avec l'ami Pierre
On allait boire nos vingt ans

Jojo se prenait pour Voltaire
Et Pierre pour Casanova
Et moi, moi qui étais le plus fier
Moi, moi je me prenais pour moi

Et quand vers minuit passaient les notaires
Qui sortaient de l'hôtel des, "Trois Faisans"
On leur montrait notre cul et nos bonnes manières
En leur chantant:

Les bourgeois c'est comme les cochons
Plus ça devient vieux plus ça devient bête
Les bourgeois c'est comme les cochons
Plus ça devient vieux plus ça devient c—

Le cœur bien au chaud, les yeux dans la bière
Chez la grosse Adrienne de Montalant
Avec l'ami Jojo, et avec l'ami Pierre
On allait boire nos vingt ans

Voltaire dansait comme un vicaire
Et Casanova n'osait pas
Et moi, moi qui restait le plus fier
Moi j'étais presque aussi saoul que moi

Et quand vers minuit passaient les notaires
Qui sortaient de l'hôtel des, "Trois Faisans"
On leur montrait notre cul et nos bonnes manières
En leur chantant:

Les bourgeois c'est comme les cochons
Plus ça devient vieux plus ça devient bête
Les bourgeois c'est comme les cochons
Plus ça devient vieux plus ça devient c—

Le cœur au repos, les yeux bien sur terre
Au bar de l'hôtel des "Trois Faisans"
Avec maître Jojo, et avec maître Pierre
Entre notaires on passe le temps

Jojo parle de Voltaire
Et Pierre de Casanova
Et moi, moi qui suis resté le plus fier
Moi, moi je parle encore de moi

Et c'est en sortant vers minuit Monsieur le
Commissaire

Que tous les soirs de chez la Montalant
De jeunes 'Peigne-culs' nous montrent leur derrière
En nous chantant:

Les bourgeois c'est comme les cochons
Plus ça devient vieux plus ça devient bête
Les bourgeois c'est comme les cochons
Plus ça devient vieux plus ça devient c--