

Edward Taylor
(1645-1729)

UPON A SPIDER CATCHING A FLY

Thou sorrow, venom elf;
 Is this thy play,
To spin a web out of thyself
 To catch a fly?
 For why?

This goes to pot, that not
 Nature doth call.
Strive not above what
 strength hath got,
Lest in the brawl
 Thou fall.

I saw a pettish wasp
 Fall foul therein:
Whom yet thy whorl pins did
 not hasp
Lest he should fling
 His sting

This fray seems thus to us:
 Hell's spider gets
His entrails spun to whipcords
 thus,
And wove to nets,
 And sets.

But as afraid, remote
 Didst stand hereat,
And with thy little fingers
 stroke
And gently tap
 His back.

To tangle Adam's race
 In's stratagems
To their destructions, spoiled,
 made base
By venom things,
 Damned sins.

Thus gently him didst treat
 Lest he should pet,
And in a froppish, aspish heat
 Should greatly fret
 Thy net.

But mighty, gracious Lord,
 Communicate
Thy grace to break the cord;
 afford
Us glory's gate
 And state

Whereas the silly fly,
 Caught by its leg,
Thou by the throat tookst
 hastily,
And 'hind the head
 Bite dead.

We'll nightingale sing like,
 When perched on high
In glory's cage, thy glory,
 bright:
Yea, thankfully,
 For joy.