

**A Selection of Extracts of Proverbs and idioms  
from *The Blue Cloak* by Pieter Bruegel the Elder  
using the 123 in the itinerary provided by the Berlin Gemäldegalerie.**

**Left bottom corner**

To be able to tie even the devil to a pillow  
Obstinacy overcomes everything

Lower left



To bang one's head against a brick wall  
To try to achieve the impossible

Lower left



One foot shod, the other bare  
Balance is paramount

Lower left



The sow pulls the bung  
Negligence will be rewarded with disaster

Lower left



One shears sheep, the other shears pigs  
One has all the advantages, the other none

Lower left



The herring does not fry here  
It's not going according to plan

Lower left



## Top left section

It depends on the fall of the cards  
It is up to chance

Upper left



The world is turned upside down  
Everything is the opposite of what it should be

Upper left



The die is cast  
The decision is made  
Upper left



Fools get the best cards  
Luck can overcome intelligence

Upper left



To have the roof tiled with tarts  
To be very wealthy

Upper left



**Top right section**

To toss feathers in the wind  
To work fruitlessly

Upper middle



To gaze at the stork  
To waste one's time

Upper middle



To try to kill two flies with one stroke  
To be efficient (equivalent to today's To kill two birds with one stone)

Upper middle



If the blind lead the blind both will fall in the ditch  
There is no point in being guided by others who are equally ignorant

Upper right



To keep one's eye on the sail  
To stay alert, be wary

also

It is easy to sail before the wind  
If conditions are favourable it is not difficult to achieve one's goal

Upper right



If I am not meant to be their keeper, I will let geese be geese  
Do not interfere in matters that are not your concern

Upper right



To hold an eel by the tail  
To undertake a difficult task (Compare: "Catch a tiger by the tail")

Right



## Lower Right

To keep the hen's egg and let the goose's egg go  
To make a bad decision

## Right



To be barely able to reach from one loaf to another  
To have difficulty living within budget

## Lower right



He who has spilt his porridge cannot scrape it all up again  
Once something is done it cannot be undone (Compare: "Don't cry over spilt milk")

## Lower right



To have the world spinning on one's thumb

To have every advantage (Compare: "To have the world in the palm of your hand")

Lower right



To have to stoop to get on in the world

To succeed one must be willing to make sacrifices

Lower right



Two dogs over one bone seldom agree

To argue over a single point

Middle

