

To A Mouse, On Turning Her Up In Her Nest With The Plough

Wee, sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
Wi' murd'ring pattle!

*Small, sleek, cowering, timid beast,
Oh, what a panic's in your breast!
You need not dash away so hastily,
With hurrying clatter!
I would be loath to run and chase you,
With murdering paddle!*

I'm truly sorry man's dominion,
Has broken nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion,
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal!

*I'm truly sorry man's dominion,
Has broken nature's social union,
And justifies that ill opinion,
Which makes you startle
At me, you poor, earth-born companion,
And fellow mortal!*

I doubt na, whiles, but thou mayst thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen icker in a thrave
'S a sma' request;
I'll get a blessing wi' the lave,
An' never miss't!

*I doubt not, at times, but you mayst thieve;
What then? poor beast, you must live!
An odd ear of corn out of 24 sheaves
Is a small request;
I'll get a blessing with what's left,
And never miss it!*

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin!
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's winds ensuin,
Baith snell an' keen!

*Your small little house, too, in ruin!
Its fragile walls the winds are strewing!
And nothing, now, to build a new one,
Of grasses green!
And bleak December's winds ensuing,
Both fast and sharp!*

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
An' weary winter comin fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell-
Till crash! the cruel coulter past
Out thro' thy cell.

*You saw the fields laid bare and empty,
And weary winter coming fast,
And cozy here, beneath the blast,
You thought to dwell -
'Til crash! The cruel plow passed
Right through your house.*

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
An' cranreuch cauld!

*That small little heap of leaves and stubble,
Has cost you many a weary nibble!
Now you're turned out, for all your trouble,
Of house and hold,
To face the winter's sleety drizzle,
And frosty cold!*

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain;
The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft agley,
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
For promis'd joy!

*But, Mousie, you are not alone,
In proving foresight may be vain;
The best-laid schemes of mice and men
Go often awry,
And leave us nothing but grief and pain,
for promised joy.*

Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' me
The present only toucheth thee:
But, Och! I backward cast my e'e.
On prospects drear!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!

*Still you are blessed, compared with me
The present only touches you:
But, Oh! I backward cast my eye.
On prospects drear!
And forward, though I cannot see,
I guess and fear!*

-Robert Burns

(translated, with no attempt to keep the rhyme nor meter, by Charlene Wight)