

To A Mouse, On turning her up in her nest with the plough, November 1785

By Robert Burns

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

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 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 blessin' wi' the lave,
 An' never miss't!

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!

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.

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!

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 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!