

To a Mouse.

By Robert Burns.

On turning her up in her nest with the plough. Written November 1785.

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' murdering 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, whyles, but thou may 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!
It's silly wa's the win's are strewin!
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's win's 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 monie a weary nibble!
Now thou's turned 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 promis'd joy!

Still thou are blest, compared 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!

Frae a Moosie

By John Bonthron:

(On seeing a mouse displaced from a garage at No 6 Kessington Drive, July 2014.)

Cooried doon here sleepin' sound,
Snug in bare scrape 'neath the ground,
'Till you wi' Death's ploo rent richt
through,
An' slasht ma hoosie fair in two,
Toss't oot tae rain an' freezin' dribble.
Cast doon upon this cruel grey stibble.

In furrow'd field Ah'll find nae rick
A corner dry whaur Ah mon pick
A daemon icker for ma denn'r
Or mak a nest tae shelt'r unner.
Whilst thole this icy blast wi' tremble,
Whilst shun yer cold unhelpful drivell.

Ah ken fine weel whit toils we share!
Both man and beast 'gainst Winter's
snare,
Tho' you, tae wife and weans can 'turn,
An' stick yer tae's richt up yer lum,
But me, Am'm left here by ma lane,
Shivrin', freezin', bare skin an' bane.

Why no' 'vise me whaur tae flee,
Tae find anither place tae be?
A cosy, safer nook tae bide,
Frae ither murdr'rs Ah mon hide,
Live oot ma life an honest thief,
Or merely sigh wi' just relief.

O aye, whit sanguine spiels ye spoot,
Tae me yer sage advice dole oot,
Screevin' oot wily words for fame,
O' mice an' men, an' fancy dames,
At me, who's no wan bit o' schoolin'?
But fine Ah see the wool yer pullin'!

It's weel kent mice huv no' the pen,
An' so live free the cant o' men,
We backwurds canna cast oor ee',
An' forwurds dinnae want tae see,
Nor frae Oblivion run an' hide.
Our hope? Is simply tae abide.

An' whit o' oor sudden, swift encounter,
Will linger as ye hameward daunder?
A Fermer Poet meets a Moosie?
Pity is, Ah've lost ma hoosie!
Be off Sir! Go to greet our Muse,
An' wi' this Moosie's tale, enthuse.