To a Mouse

On Turning Her Up in Her Nest With the Plough

By: Robert Burns
Adapted by Fishtank Staff

Little, artful, cowering, timid beast,
Oh, what a panic is in your heart!
You need not start away so hasty
With bickering prattle!
I would be loath to run and chase you,
With murdering scraper

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

I doubt not, sometimes, that you may steal;
What then? Poor beast, you must live!
An odd ear in twenty-four sheaves
Is a small request;
I will get a blessing with what is left,
And never miss it.

Your small house, too, in ruin!
Its feeble walls the winds are scattering!
And nothing now, to build a new one,
Of coarse green foliage!
And bleak December's winds coming,
Both bitter and piercing!

Burns, R. (1785). To a mouse. Modified by Fishtank Learning, Inc. The poem "To a Mouse" by Burns (1785) is in the public domain.

You saw the fields laid bare and empty,
And weary winter coming fast,
And cozy here, beneath the blast,
You thought to dwell,
Till crash! The cruel plough passed
Out through your cell.

That small heap of leaves and stubble,
Has cost you many a weary nibble!
Now you are turned out, for all your trouble,
Without house or holding,
To endure the winter's sleety dribble,
And hoar-frost cold.

But Mouse, you are not alone,
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best laid schemes of mice and men
Go often askew,
And leave us nothing but grief and pain,
For promised joy!

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

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