

**To a Mouse, on Turning Her Up in Her Nest  
with the Plough,** by Robert Burns, 1785.

Wee, sleekit, cowrin, 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!

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 promis'd joy!

Still thou art 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!

**To a Gator, on Cutting Him Up in His Swamp,  
and How,** ©Tim Davis, March 2008.

Wee, sleekit, cowerin', tim'rous Gator,  
O, what a panic, soon or later,  
When Tallahassee's comin' at yer,  
    To axe thy budget!  
Oh what departments, Legislature,  
    You'll ask to budge it?

It's truly sad the State's dominion  
Has broken nature's social union,  
An' justifies the pols' opinion,  
    Which makes them throttle  
Me, or faculty companion,  
    An' fellow mortal!

I doubt na, whiles, but thou mayst teach;  
What then? poor Gator, thou beseech  
A fifty million, this year each,  
    'S a small request;  
From politician's flowery speech;  
    They'll never miss't!

Thy wee bit Swampie, too, in ruin!  
Its once strong majors: winds are strewin!  
An' nothing, now, to take a freshman,  
    O' cash once green!  
An' Bernie Machen's hands they're forcin':  
    Cuts sharp an' keen!

Thou saw the academic fields,  
An' thought thy Futures Bright to yield,  
An' cozie here, with cuts that healed,  
    Thou hoped to say—  
Till crash' thy Sutures Bleak revealed,  
    Cuts fell and fey.

That wee bit heap o' profs an' majors,  
Has cost them money; legislators  
Have turned thee out, and skinned a Gator,  
    With hearts turned cold!  
Perhaps they hope to heal thee later,  
    If breath be hold!

But Gator, thou hast known thy game,  
In proving foresight may be vain;  
The best-laid schemes o' Governmen'  
    Go oft astray,  
An' leave us nought but grief an' pain,  
    For promised pay!

Still thou art blessed, compared with me,  
The President has cut me free,  
And och! with backward cuts, his eye  
    Wells up in tears!  
Yet forward, look and clearly see:  
    Election nears!

**To a Mouse:** Modern English, non-poetic translation.

Little sleek cowering timorous beast,  
Oh what a panic is in your breast!  
You don't need to start away so hastily,  
    with bickering noises!  
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,  
And justifies that ill opinion,  
    Which makes you startle  
At me, your poor, earth-born companion,  
    And fellow mortal!

I don't doubt that you steal;  
What then! Poor beast, you must live!  
A stray bit of grain in all the heaps  
    Is a small request;  
I'll get a blessing with the rest,  
    And never miss it!

Your tiny house, also, in ruin!  
It's silly walls the winds are strewing!  
And nothing, now, to build a new one  
    Of green stubble!  
And bleak December's winds ensuing,  
    Both sharp and keen!

You saw the fields laid bare and waste,  
And weary winter coming fast,  
And cozy here, beneath the blast,  
    You thought to dwell—  
When crash! the cruel plowshare past  
    Threw out your cell.

Your little heap of leaves and stubble,  
Has cost you many a weary nibble!  
Now you're turn out, for all your trouble,  
    From house and hold,  
To suffer the winter's sleety drizzle,  
    And hoar-frost cold!

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

Still, you are blessed, compared with me.  
Only the present touches you:  
Alas! I backward cast my eye,  
    On dreary past chances!  
And forward, though I cannot see,  
    I guess and fear!