To a Mouse

(translation!)

(Whilst ploughing on a November day, Burns ruined the nest of a field mouse. He ponders why the creature runs away in such terror)

Oh, tiny timorous forlorn beast,

Oh why the panic in your breast ?

You need not dart away in haste

To some corn-rick

I'd never run and chase thee,

With murdering stick.

I'm truly sorry man's dominion

Has broken nature's social union,

And justifies that ill opinion

Which makes thee startle

At me, thy poor earth-born companion,

And fellow mortal.

I do not doubt you have to thieve;

What then? Poor beastie you must live;

One ear of corn that's scarcely missed

Is small enough:

I'll share with you all this year's grist,

Without rebuff.

Thy wee bit housie too in ruin,

Its fragile walls the winds have strewn,

And you've nothing new to build a new one,

Of grasses green;

And bleak December winds ensuing,

Both cold and keen.

You saw the fields laid bare and waste,

And weary winter coming fast,

And cosy there beneath the blast,

Thou thought to dwell,

Till crash; the cruel ploughman crushed

Thy little cell.

Your wee bit heap of leaves and stubble,

Had cost thee many a weary nibble.

Now you're turned out for all thy trouble

Of house and home

To bear the winter's sleety drizzle,

And hoar frost cold.

But, mousie, thou art not alane,

In proving foresight may be in vain,

The best laid schemes of mice and men,

Go oft astray,

And leave us nought but grief and pain,

To rend our day.

Still thou art blessed, compared with me!

The present only touches thee,

But, oh, I backward cast my eye

On prospects drear,

And forward, though I cannot see,

I guess and fear.