**“To A Mouse”**

*by Robert Burns (1785)*

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Original</th>
<th>Translation</th>
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| **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.** | **Small, crafty, cowering, timorous little beast,**  
  **O, what a panic is in your little breast!**  
  **You need not start away so hasty**  
  **With argumentative chatter!**  
  **I would be loath to run and chase you,**  
  **With murdering plough-staff.** |
| **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'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 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.** | **I doubt not, sometimes, but you may steal;**  
  **What then? Poor little 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.** |
| **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!** | **Your small house, too, in ruin!**  
  **Its feeble walls the winds are scattering!**  
  **And nothing now, to build a new one,**  
  **Of coarse grass green!**  
  **And bleak December's winds coming,**  
  **Both bitter and 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.** | **You saw the fields laid bare and wasted,**  
  **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.** |
| **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!** | **But little Mouse, you are not alone,**  
  **In proving foresight may be vain:**  
  **The best laid schemes of mice and men**  
  **Go often awry,**  
  **And leave us nothing but grief and pain,**  
  **For promised 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, thou' I canna see,**  
  **I guess an' fear!** | **Still you are blest, 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!** |