Burns' original: Tae a Moose 1785

Translation

Wee, sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie,
Small, crafty, cowering, timid little beast,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Oh, what a panic is in your little breast!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty
You need not start away so hasty
Wi' bickering brattle!
With argumentative chatter!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
I would be loath to run and chase you,
Wi' murdering pattle.
With murdering plough-staff.

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

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve;
I doubt not, sometimes, but you may steal;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
What then? Poor little beast, you must live!
A daimen icker in a thrave
An odd ear in twenty-four sheaves
'S a sma' request;
Is a small request;
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
I would be loath to run and chase you,
Wi' murdering pattle.
With murdering plough-staff.

Thy wee-bit housie, too, in ruin!
Your small house, too, in ruin!
It's silly wa's the win's are strewin!
Its feeble walls the winds are scattering!
An' naethin', now, to big a new ane,
And nothing now, to build a new one,
O' foggage green!
Of coarse green foliage!
An' bleak December's win's ensuin,
And bleak December's winds coming,
Baith snell an' keen!
Both bitter and piercing!

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
You saw the fields laid bare and wasted,
An' weary winter comin fast,
And weary winter coming fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
And cozy here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
You thought to dwell,
Till crash! the cruel coulter past
Till crash! the cruel plough passed
Out thro' thy cell.
Out through your cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
That small heap of leaves and stubble,
Has cost thee monie a weary nibble!
Has cost you many a weary nibble!
Now thou's turned out, for a' thy trouble,
Now you are turned out, for all your trouble,
But house or hald,
Without house or holding,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
To endure the winter's sleety dribble,
An' cranneuch cauld.
And hoar-frost cold.

But Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
But little Mouse, you are not alone,
In proving foresight may be vain:
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
The best laid schemes of mice and men
Gang aft agley,
Go often askew,
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
And leave us nothing but grief and pain,
For promis'd joy!
For promised joy!

But thou are blest, compared wi' me!
Still you are blessed, compared with me!
The present only toucheth thee:
The present only touches you:
But och! I backward cast my e'e,
When—ouch! I backward cast my eye,
On prospects drear!
On prospects dreary!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
And forward, though I cannot see,
I guess an' fear!