**The Standard English Version**

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| Small, sleek, cowering, timorous beast, Oh, what panic is in your breast! You need not start away so hasty With a hurrying scamper! I would be loath to run and chase you, With a murderous spade!  I'm truly sorry that Man's dominion Has broken Nature's social union, And justifies that ill opinion Which makes you startled At me, your poor, earth-born companion And fellow mortal!  I doubt not that you may steal; So what? Poor beast, you must live! An odd ear from twenty four sheaves of corn is a small request: I'll get a blessing with the rest, And never miss it!  Your tiny housie, too, is in ruin! Its feeble walls the winds are strewing! And nothing now, from which to build a new one Of foliage green! And bleak December's winds ensuing Both bitter and keen!  You saw the fields laid bare and wasted And weary Winter coming fast, And cosy here, beneath the blast, You thought to dwell, Until crash! the cruel plow passed Right through your cell.  That tiny heap of leaves and stubble (grain stalks) Has cost you many a weary nibble! Now you are turned out for your trouble Without house or home (belongings), To endure the Winter's sleety dribble, and frosty cold.  But Mousie, you are not alone In proving that foresight may be vain: The best laid schemes (plans) of mice and men Go oft astray (oft go awry) And leave us nothing but grief and pain Instead of promised joy!  Still, you are blessed, compared with me! Only this moment touches you: But oh! I backward cast my eye On prospects turned to sadness! And though forward I cannot see, I guess and fear! |