

## **POEM RESPONSE**

Read the following poem. This poem inspired Steinbeck's title of the book. As you read, record your response to each stanza. You can focus on analyzing any of the following:

- \*Literary devices
- \*Punctuation and line breaks
- \*Rhythm
- \*Rhyme scheme
- \*Diction
- \*Plot
- \*Characterization

Then, answer these questions:

Why do you think Steinbeck chose this poem for his title?

Which line inspired him?

Why did he choose that line?

How is this poem related, in content or theme, to the book? (Explain in 5-7 sentences)

After you read and respond, choose the two areas you responded to most and write a paragraph explanation of each on a separate sheet of paper.

## To A Mouse

On turning her up in her nest with the plough, November 1785.

Robert Burns

POEM

RESPONSE

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Small, sleek, cowering, timorous beast,  
O, what a panic is in your breast!  
You need not start away so hasty  
With hurrying scamper!  
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,  
And justifies that ill opinion  
Which makes thee startle  
At me, thy poor, earth born companion  
And fellow mortal!

I doubt not, sometimes, but you may steal;  
What then? Poor 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.

Your small house, too, in ruin!  
It's 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!

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 past  
Out through your cell.

That small bit heap of leaves and stubble,  
Has cost you many a weary nibble!  
Now you are turned out, for all your trouble,  
Without house or holding,  
To endure the winter's sleety dribble,  
And hoar-frost cold.

But Mouse, you are not alone,  
In proving foresight may be vain:  
The best laid schemes of mice and men  
Go often askew,  
And leaves us nothing but grief and pain,  
For promised joy!

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!