

**Sonnet: 'I found a ball of grass among the hay'**

I found a ball of grass among the hay  
And progged it as I passed and went away,  
And when I looked I fancied something stirred  
And turned again and hoped to catch the bird,  
When out an old mouse bolted in the wheat  
With all her young ones hanging at her teats.  
She looked so odd and so grotesque to me,  
I ran and wondered what the thing could be  
And pushed the knapweed bunches where I stood,  
When the mouse hurried from the crawling brood.  
The young ones squeaked and when I went away  
She found her nest again among the hay.  
The water o'er the pebbles scarce could run  
And broad old cesspools glittered in the sun.

Written sometime in 1836, when Clare was living in Northborough.

*John Clare*. Edited by R. K. R. Thornton. London: Everyman, 1997. 54.  
With grateful thanks to Professor Thornton.