

Emily Dickinson

(1830-1886)

#61 (c.1859)

Papa above!  
Regard a Mouse  
O'erpowered by the Cat!  
Reserve within thy kingdom  
A "Mansion" for the Rat!

Snug in seraphic Cupboards  
To nibble all the day,  
While unsuspecting Cycles  
Wheel solemnly away!

#### ANALYSIS

"This first poem is a mockery of anthropomorphism, the tendency of man to create God in his own image. 'Suppose,' Miss Dickinson seems to have thought 'a mouse conjured up a vision of God and eternity—what would this vision be like?' Playfully, then, she pictured the animal considering a car as the angel of death and conceiving of heaven as a snug cupboard where, for all eternity, the angel-mouse might nibble at his cheese. The irreverent way she played with religious concepts was much in the spirit of many contemporaneous nineteenth-century American humorists."

James E. Miller, Jr.  
*The Literature of the United States II*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition  
(Scott, Foresman 1953-66) 178