

# MORE OVINE RESILIENCE

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*Every task involves constraint,  
Solve the thing without complaint;  
There are magic links and chains  
Forged to loose our rigid brains.  
Structures, strictures, though they bind,  
Strangely liberate the mind.*

James Falen, quoted in Douglas Hofstadter's *Le Ton beau de Marot*.

The February 2008 issue of Word Ways presented "Mary Had a Little Lamb" written under a large number of literary constraints. Here are a further number:

## Four Letter Words

Mary owns such tiny lamb: just look, pale wool like snow.  
From home each morn, Lamb goes with lass; here both come: good show!  
They open door, join prof with kids; firm rule bars pets: "Oust lamb!"  
Plan goes awry, kids howl with glee, have ball, make desk tops slam.

## Haiku Mary

Lamb's with Mary always.  
They enter school against rule.  
Students laugh and whoop.

## Word lengths replicate digits of pi

It's a lamb, a white shearling—in Molly's place she lives.  
Mistress ambulates outside, partnered oft by pet.  
Yearling into school—it breaks rule!  
Now the children see it; jocular shoutings ensue.

## Mary Recites the Alphabet

Always beside chaperone, dainty ewe, fleece gleaming hoarfrost,  
Insouciantly joins kindergarten lyceum.  
Mary nonchalantly overlooks pedagogue's querulous "Remove!"  
Students turn uproarious, voice witticisms, exhibit youthful zest.

### **Mary Reiterates Her Story**

Mary wAlks heR tinY eWe—hAs fLeece liKe Snow (posH wEar!).  
everywheRe That mIstress weNt , marY's Ewe Would ambIE tHere.  
mAid Starts For schooL—thEy Enter Class—thE ruLe Is starK: “dEpart!”  
girlS aNd bOys croWd uP tO See tHe eWe attEnd heAd staRt.

### **Alphabetical Mary**

mArY's lamB is minusCule, DEense Fleece that's Gleaming wHIte.  
every Jaunt that mary tooK, the LaMb kept her iN sight.  
it followed Promptly into school (Quite wRong, all ruleS atTest);  
stUdents, VieWing lamb in school, eXploded, Yelled with Zest.