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—as fleecelike 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, DEnse 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.

GERUNDING

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Bringing my knitting to meeting.
The meeting’s on reading.
Knitting for meeting,
meeting for reading.
Reading or knitting?
Knitting for reading.
Needing to meet,
needing to knit,
meaning to read
about needing to knit.