

Anne Bradstreet: Several Poems Compiled with Great Variety of Wit and Learning (1678)

The Author to Her Book

Thou ill-formed offspring of my feeble brain,
Who after birth didst by my side remain,
Till snatched from thence by friends, less wise than true,
Who thee abroad exposed to public view,
Who thee in rags, halting to th' press to trudge,
Where errors were not lessened (all may judge).
At thy return my blushing was not small,
My rambling brat (in print) should mother call.
I cast thee by as one unfit for light,
Thy visage was so irksome in my sight;
Yet being mine own, at length affection would
Thy blemishes amend, if so I could.
I wash'd thy face, but more defects I saw,
And rubbing off a spot, still made a flaw.
I stretch thy joints to make thee even feet,
Yet still thou run'st more hobbling than is meet.
In better dress to trim thee was my mind,
But nought save home-spun cloth, i' th' house I find.
In this array, 'mongst vulgars may'st thou roam.
In critic's hands beware thou dost not come,
And take thy way where yet thou art not known.
If for thy father asked, say, thou had'st none;
And for thy mother, she alas is poor,
Which caused her thus to send thee out of door.

To My Dear and Loving Husband

If ever two were one, then surely we.
If ever man were lov'd by wife, then thee;
If ever wife was happy in a man,
Compare with me, ye women, if you can.
I prize thy love more than whole mines of gold
Or all the riches that the East cloth hold.
My love is such that rivers cannot quench,
Nor ought but love from thee give recompense.
Thy love is such I can no way repay.
The heavens reward thee manifold, I pray.
Then while we live, in love let's so persever
That when we live no more, we may live ever.

On My Dear Grandchild Simon Bradstreet, Who Died on 16 November, 1669, Being But a Month, and One Day Old

No sooner came, but gone, and fall'n asleep.
Acquaintance short, yet parting caused us weep;
Three flowers, two scarcely blown, the last i' th' bud,
Cropped by th' Almighty's hand; yet is He good.
With dreadful awe before Him let's be mute,
Such was His will, but why, let's not dispute,
With humble hearts and mouths put in the dust,
Let's say He's merciful as well as just.
He will return and make up all our losses,
And smile again after our bitter crosses.
Go pretty babe, go rest with sisters twain;
Among the blest in endless joys remain.

**Here Follows Some Verses upon the Burning of Our House, July
10th, 1666 (1867)**

In silent night when rest I took,
 For sorrow near I did not look,
 I waken'd was with thund'ring noise
 And piteous shrieks of dreadful voice.
 That fearful sound of "Fire!" and "Fire!"
 Let no man know is my desire.
 I, starting up, the light did spy,
 And to my God my heart did cry
 To strengthen me in my distress
 And not to leave me succourless.
 Then, coming out, beheld a space,
 The flame consume my dwelling place.
 And, when I could no longer look,
 I blest His name that gave and took,
 That laid my goods now in the dust.
 Yea, so it was, and so 'twas just.
 It was His own, it was not mine;
 Far be it that I should repine.
 He might of all justly bereft,
 But yet sufficient for us left.
 When by the ruins oft I past,
 My sorrowing eyes aside did cast,
 And here and there the places spy
 Where oft I sat, and long did lie.
 Here stood that trunk, and there that chest;
 There lay that store I counted best.
 My pleasant things in ashes lie,
 And them behold no more shall I.
 Under thy roof no guest shall sit,
 Nor at thy table eat a bit.
 No pleasant tale shall 'ere be told,
 Nor things recounted done of old.
 No candle e'er shall shine in thee,
 Nor bridegroom's voice e'er heard shall be.

In silence ever shalt thou lie;
 Adieu, Adieu; all's vanity.
 Then straight I 'gin my heart to chide,
 And didst thy wealth on earth abide?
 Didst fix thy hope on mold'ring dust?
 The arm of flesh didst make thy trust?
 Raise up thy thoughts above the sky
 That dunghill mists away may fly.
 Thou hast an house on high erect,
 Framed by that mighty Architect,
 With glory richly furnished,
 Stands permanent though this be fled.
 It's purchased, and paid for too
 By Him who hath enough to do.
 A price so vast as is unknown,
 Yet, by His gift, is made thine own.
 There's wealth enough, I need no more;
 Farewell my pelf, farewell my store.
 The world no longer let me love,
 My hope and treasure lies above.