**John Woodbridge’s preface to Bradstreet’s poetry:**

...the worse effect of his [the reader's] reading will be unbelief, which will make him question whether it be a woman's work, and ask, is it possible? If any do, take this as an answer from him that dares to avow it; it is the work of a woman, honored, and esteemed where she lives, for her gracious demeanor, her eminent parts, her pious conversation, her courteous disposition, her exact diligence in her place, and discreet managing of her family occasions, and more than so, these poems are the fruit but of some few hours, curtailed from her sleep and other refreshments.

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| **Puritanism: Anne Bradstreet (1612-1672)**

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| **Anne Bradstreet: *Here Follows Some Verses upon the Burning of Our House, July 10, 1666*** |  |

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|   | In silent night when rest I tookFor sorrow near I did not lookI waked was with thund'ring noiseAnd 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 cryTo strengthen me in my distressAnd not to leave me succorless.Then, coming out, beheld a spaceThe 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 bereftBut yet sufficient for us left.When by the ruins oft I pastMy sorrowing eyes aside did cast,And here and there the places spyWhere 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 e'er 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 shall thou lie,Adieu, Adieu, all's vanity.Then straight I 'gin my heart to chide,And did 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 skyThat 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 tooBy Him who hath enough to do.A price so vast as is unknownYet 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. Pair up and read this poem aloud. Take turns.1. What is Bradstreet’s tone (attitude toward her subject)? How do you know?2. How does this poem reflect puritan religious beliefs, as well as plainness? |

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Anne Bradstreet – “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,

Made 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,

The visage was so irksome in my sight;

Yet being mine own, at length affection would

Thy blemishes amend, if so I could.

I washed thy face, but more defects I saw,

And rubbing off a spot still made a flaw.

I stretched 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 homespun 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 hadst none;

And for thy mother, she alas is poor,

Which caused her thus to send thee out of door.

Anne Bradstreet – “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 doth hold.
My love is such that Rivers cannot quench,
Nor ought but love from thee give recompence.
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 persevere
That when we live no more, we may live ever.