

The Author to Her Book

BY ANNE BRADSTREET

Thou ill-form'd 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, expos'd to publick view,
Made thee in raggs, halting to th' press to trudge,
Where errors were not lessened (all may judg).
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 stretched thy joynts to make thee even feet,
Yet still thou run'st more hobling then 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 mayst thou roam.
In Criticks hands, beware thou dost not come;
And take thy way where yet thou art not known,
If for thy Father askt, say, thou hadst none:
And for thy Mother, she alas is poor,
Which caus'd her thus to send thee out of door.

Verses upon the Burning of our House, July 10th, 1666

BY ANNE BRADSTREET

*Here Follows Some Verses Upon the Burning
of Our house, July 10th. 1666. Copied Out of
a Loose Paper.*

In silent night when rest I took,
For sorrow near I did not look,
I wakened 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 straighten me in my Distress
And not to leave me succourless.
Then, coming out, behold 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 sate 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 talk 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 did thy wealth on earth abide?
Didst fix thy hope on mould'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 a 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.

The first published poet in America, Anne Bradstreet, was a Puritan mother of eight children. Her poem "The Author to Her Book" was written in response to an edition of her collection *The Tenth Muse*, which was published without her consent or knowledge. More by Anne Bradstreet. To Her Father with Some Verses. Most truly honoured, and as truly dear, If worth in me or ought I do appear, Who can of right better demand the same Than may your worthy self from whom it came? The principal might yield a greater sum, Yet handled ill, amounts but to this crumb; My stock's so small I know She calls the book of poetry a rambling brat (in print) reinforcing the authors feelings of incapability to change the untamed nature of what is now in print. It has been published and all may see it, whether she likes it or not. Worse yet, any criticism that it takes will be directly aimed at her, the mother, despite her innocence in the matter. This use of metaphor allows the reader to relate emotionally to Bradstreets situation. The Author to Her Book reveals a deeper, unnamed feeling, which many of us have experienced. Having ones inner-self exposed to the world for all to view and critique is a situation to which every writer can relate. Bradstreets poem makes us understand not only her nature but also our own. When the author finally gets her own copy of her book she is still unhappy. It is just as bad, if not worse than she remembers. She wants to throw it out of her sight, but knows that it belongs to her, as if it were her own child, and she is unable to. She decides to take it under her wing and attempt to improve it. All of her efforts are in vain though and she is forced to send her "child" away. She tells it to go somewhere that it is not known, and to pretend that it's mother was too poor to take care of it. Analysis of The Author to Her Book. Lines 1- 6. Thou ill-form'd offspring of my feeb