Upon the Burning of Our House and
To My Dear and Loving Husband
by Anne Bradstreet
Connect to the Poems

Anne Bradstreet’s poetry combines personal feelings with Puritan religious belief. The Puritans were Protestants in colonial New England who believed in plain living and strict morality. Put a check in the Before Reading column next to the statements below you agree with.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before Reading</th>
<th>After Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Puritans were stern and unemotional.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Puritans were interested only in religion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>New England colonial life was grim.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colonial women had very little freedom.</td>
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<tr>
<td>New England colonists read only the Bible.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Build Background

- Anne Bradstreet was born in England in 1612, but she moved with her husband to the Massachusetts Bay Colony and helped develop its Puritan community.
- Writing poetry was not something that women typically did, but Bradstreet found the time in between caring for her children and making a life in the wilderness.
- Bradstreet was the first published poet in America.

After reading these statements about Bradstreet, write two predictions on the lines below about her and her poems.

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

Set Purposes for Reading

In the first of these two poems, Bradstreet comes to terms with the loss of her home and possessions; in the second, she rejoices in her love for her husband. As you read the two poems, note how they reflect Bradstreet’s feelings, her religious views, and the degree to which life after death occupied her thoughts.
**Literary Element  Metaphor**

A **metaphor** is a figure of speech that compares two seemingly unlike things. Its purpose is to show things in a new light. By saying that “time is a storm in which we are all lost,” the writer suggests a different way of looking at an abstraction like time. An extended metaphor is one that makes more than one point of comparison. Work with a partner to make metaphors by completing two of these sentences.

The trees are ________________________________________________________.

A city is ____________________________________________________________.

Each new day is ____________________________________________________.

**Reading Strategy  Draw Conclusions About Author’s Beliefs**

An author’s perspective refers to the ideas, values, feelings, and beliefs that influence how a writer views a subject. As you read the poems, create a chart like the one below to record what Bradstreet’s writing shows about her beliefs and values.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bradstreet’s beliefs and values</th>
<th>Evidence from poems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>“Upon the Burning of Our House”</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God can give comfort.</td>
<td>“And to my God my heart did cry”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>“To My Dear and Loving Husband”</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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</table>

**Vocabulary  Synonyms**

**Synonyms** are words that are the same or similar in meaning. They are helpful in developing vocabulary because it is often easier to recall a one-word synonym than to remember a longer dictionary definition. Look at the definitions for the vocabulary words on the right. Say each word out loud. Then circle words in each definition that could be used as synonyms for the vocabulary word.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Synonyms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **bereft** (*bi retf*) *adj.* deprived of something; lacking something needed or expected
- **chide** (*chı̄d*) *v.* reproach; scold or express disapproval
- **recompense** (*rek’s am pens’*) *n.* payment in return for something given or done; compensation
Upon the Burning of Our House

Reading Strategy

Draw Conclusions About Author’s Beliefs Underline the words and phrases in this passage that describe Bradstreet’s view of her relationship with God. On the lines below, summarize her belief.

_______________________________
_______________________________
_______________________________
_______________________________
_______________________________
_______________________________

Reading Strategy

Draw Conclusions About Author’s Beliefs Why does Bradstreet feel she should not complain about her losses? Write your answer on the lines below.

_______________________________
_______________________________
_______________________________
_______________________________
_______________________________
_______________________________

Vocabulary

bereft (bi reft’) adj. deprived of something; lacking something needed or expected

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 strengthen me in my distress
And not to leave me succorless.

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.

1. Succorless means “without assistance” or “helpless.”
2. This is a biblical reference to Job 1:21, “... the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”
3. Repine means “to complain” or “to yearn after something.”
Upon the Burning of Our House

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 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.

4. Adieu (a dō/) is French for “good-bye.”
5. All’s vanity is a biblical reference to Ecclesiastes 1:2 and 12:8,  “Vanity of vanities: all is vanity.”
6. Pelf is a term for money or wealth, often used disapprovingly.
To My Dear and Loving Husband

If ever two were one, then surely we.
If ever man were loved by wife, then thee;
If ever wife was happy in a man,
Compare with me, ye women, if you can.

5 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 recompense.

Thy love is such I can no way repay,

10 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.

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Literary Element

Metaphor Bradstreet suggests a comparison in line 7 of the poem. Keep in mind that she says her love is so intense that it cannot be quenched—meaning to put out or to satisfy—by rivers. Using the sentence frame below, complete her metaphor.

My love is a ____________ that rivers cannot quench.

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Vocabulary

recompense (rek’ am pens’) n. payment in return for something given or done; compensation

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Reading Strategy

Draw Conclusions About Author’s Beliefs Place a check in the blank following any statement below that expresses Bradstreet’s beliefs about love.

• Love should endure even after earthly bodies die. __________

• Love is God’s greatest gift. __________

• Love makes living in the dangerous wilderness easier. __________

• Only God has the power to reward her husband for his love. __________

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MY NOTES

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1. Ought means “anything.”
2. Here, manifold means “in many different ways.”
3. In the 1600s, the word persevere was pronounced per sev’er, with the accent on the second syllable. Therefore, it rhymes with ever in the following line.
Connect to the Poems

Reread each statement on page 18 and put a check in the After Reading column next to the ones you now agree with. On the lines below, summarize what Bradstreet’s poetry shows about Puritan life and culture in colonial New England.

_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________

Literary Element  Metaphor

Look back at the two metaphors you and your partner constructed and extended on page 19. For each metaphor, explain on the lines below how the two things being compared are similar.

_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________

Reading Strategy  Draw Conclusions About Author’s Beliefs

Look back over the reading strategy chart you made on page 19. Then use the sentence frames below to summarize Anne Bradstreet’s beliefs.

1. In “Upon the Burning of Our House,” the Puritan attitude toward worldly goods is that ______________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________________________.

2. In “To My Dear and Loving Husband,” the speaker says that ______________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________________________.

3. The two poems share a belief that ______________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________________________.
Vocabulary

A. Word Meaning  For each of the boldfaced vocabulary words below, circle the letter of the sentence that best represents the meaning of the vocabulary word. Then on the line below, write another sentence that uses the vocabulary word. Here’s an example:

intuitive
a  My friend knew without being told what I wanted for my birthday.
b  Reviewing our tax records gave the accountant an understanding of our finances.

Sentence: My dog has an intuitive grasp of my moods.

1. bereft
   a  When I misplaced my watch, I spent an anxious hour hunting for it.
b  When George broke his leg, our show lost its only good dancer.

Sentence: ____________________________________________________________________________

2. chide
   a  Sean’s mother scolded him for damaging the car.
b  Uncle Thomas teased Cynthia about her one poor grade.

Sentence: ____________________________________________________________________________

3. recompense
   a  Andy wanted to know when Jason would return his guitar.
b  Toby expected a new pair of shoes from the manufacturer after the ones he bought last week fell apart.

Sentence: ____________________________________________________________________________

B. Synonyms  Circle the letter of the word that best expresses the meaning of the boldfaced vocabulary word. Use a dictionary or thesaurus if you need help.

1. recompense
   a  repair
   b  salary
   c  redress
   d  reward

2. bereft
   a  lacking
   b  broken
   c  empty
   d  unfilled

3. chide
   a  taunt
   b  scold
   c  sneer
   d  judge

For more practice, see page 306.