

Anne Bradstreet (1612-72)

“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 5
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.
The heavens reward thee manifold, I pray. 10
Then while we live, in love let's so persevere
That when we live no more, we may live ever.

“Here followes some verses upon the burning of our house, July 10th, 1666.”

In silent night when rest I took,
For sorrow neer I did not look,
I waken'd was with thundring nois
And Piteous shrieks of dreadfull voice.
That fearfull sound of fire and fire, 5
Let no man know is my Desire.
I, starting up, the light did spye,
And to my God my heart did cry
To strengthen me in my Distresse
And not to leave me succourlesse. 10
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 layd my goods now in the dust: 15
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. 20
When by the Ruines oft I past,
My sorrowing eyes aside did cast,
And here and there the places spye
Where oft I sate, and long did lye.

Here stood that Trunk, and there that chest; 25
 There lay that store I counted best:
 My pleasant things in ashes lye,
 And them behold no more shall I.
 Under thy roof no guest shall sitt,
 Nor at thy Table eat a bitt. 30

No pleasant tale shall 'ere be told,
 Nor things recounted done of old.
 No Candle 'ere shall shine in Thee,
 Nor bridegroom's voice ere heard shall bee.
 In silence ever shalt thou lye; 35
 Adieu, Adeiu; All's vanity.

Then streight I gin my heart to chide,
 And didst thy wealth on earth abide?
 Didst fix thy hope on mouldring dust?
 The arm of flesh didst make thy trust? 40
 Raise up thy thoughts above the skye
 That dunghill mists away may flie.

Thou hast an house on high erect
 Fram'd by that mighty Architect,
 With glory richly furnished, 45
 Stands permanent tho' this bee fled.
 It's purchased, and paid for too
 By him who hath enough to doe.

A Prise so vast as is unknown,
 Yet, by his Gift, is made thine own. 50
 Ther's wealth enough, I need no more;
 Farewell my Pelf, farewell my Store.
 The world no longer let me Love,
 My hope and Treasure lyes Above.

Notes on the text:

- Line 10: *succourlesse*: without relief
- Line 11: *beheld a space*: watched for a time
- Line 14: *I blest his name that gave and took*, see Job 1:21
- Line 24: *Sate*: sat
- Line 40: *Arm of flesh*, see 2 Chron. 32:8; Isa. 9:18-20; Jer. 17:4-7
- Line 42: *Dunghill mists*, see Ezra 6:9-12.
- Line 43: *House on high erect*, see 2 Cor. 5:1; Heb. 11:10
- Line 48: *Enough to doe*: i.e. enough to do it
- Line 52: *Pelf*: property, possessions
- Line 54: *Treasure lyes Above*, see Luke 12:34