

Anne Bradstreet

March 20, 1612 – September 16, 1672

Anne Dudley was born in 1612 in Northampton, England to a well-respected Puritan family. Her father was the manager of the Earl of Lincoln's estate and her mother was a descendant of royalty.

She received an excellent education from her father, studying both classical literature such as Virgil, Plutarch, Homer, and Seneca, as well as contemporary literature of the time by such writers as Sir Walter Raleigh, John Foxe, Edmund Spenser, Francis Bacon, and William Shakespeare. She began writing poetry at a young age.

In 1628, at the age of sixteen, Anne married Simon Bradstreet, a graduate of Cambridge University and a well-known member of Puritan society. However in 1630, due to King Charles I's increasing persecution of the Puritans, the couple immigrated to the Massachusetts Bay Colony in America with Anne's parents and Simon's father.

In America, Anne continued to write poetry while also raising eight children and managing the family's farm. But for the most part she kept it private, only sharing it with close friends and family.

It was not until her brother-in-law, John Woodbridge, encouraged her to publish that her work became more widely known. In fact, he had her poems entitled "The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up In America," published without her knowledge or permission in 1650 while she was abroad in England. Despite initial criticism from male contemporaries who believed women should not be writing literature, the volume was well-received and went on to have several reprintings.

Anne's poetry often reflected traditional Puritan themes such as God, mortality, and personal relationships. However, she also wrote about uniquely American subjects like the beauty of nature and her experiences as a settler in the new land.

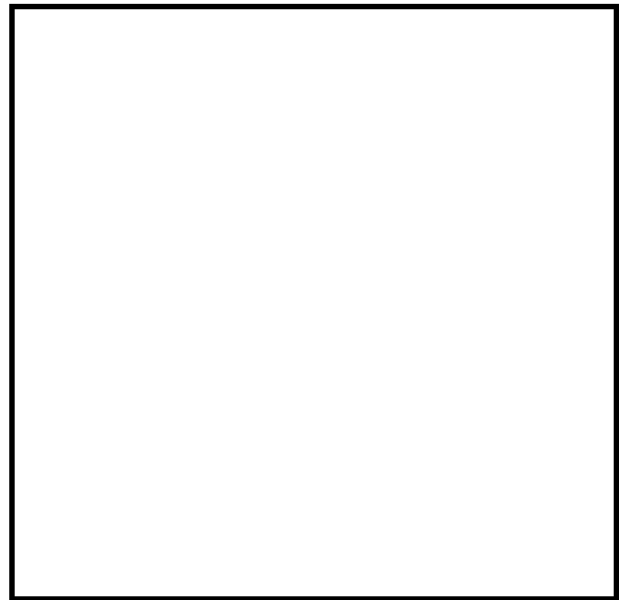
Although her health was poor all of her life, she continued to write poetry despite her hardships. Anne Bradstreet died in 1672 at the age of 60. Today, she is considered one of the earliest known American poets and an important figure in early American literature.

Poet Study

Poet: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Place of Birth: _____



3 Facts About the Poet:

Best Known Poems by the Poet:

Anne Bradstreet Selections

The Author to Her Book

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.

Before the Birth of One of Her Children

All things within this fading world hath end,
Adversity doth still our joyes attend;
No ties so strong, no friends so dear and sweet,
But with death's parting blow is sure to meet.
The sentence past is most irrevocable,
A common thing, yet oh inevitable.
How soon, my Dear, death may my steps attend,
How soon't may be thy Lot to lose thy friend,
We are both ignorant, yet love bids me
These farewell lines to recommend to thee,
That when that knot's untied that made us one,
I may seem thine, who in effect am none.
And if I see not half my dayes that's due,
What nature would, God grant to yours and you;
The many faults that well you know I have
Let be interr'd in my oblivious grave;
If any worth or virtue were in me,
Let that live freshly in thy memory
And when thou feel'st no grief, as I no harms,
Yet love thy dead, who long lay in thine arms.
And when thy loss shall be repaid with gains
Look to my little babes, my dear remains.
And if thou love thyself, or loved'st me,
These o protect from step Dames injury.
And if chance to thine eyes shall bring this verse,
With some sad sighs honour my absent Herse;
And kiss this paper for thy loves dear sake,
Who with salt tears this last Farewel did take.

Anne Bradstreet Selections

By Night When Others Soundly Slept

1
By night when others soundly slept
And hath at once both ease and Rest,
My waking eyes were open kept
And so to lie I found it best.

2
I sought him whom my Soul did Love,
With tears I sought him earnestly.
He bow'd his ear down from Above.
In vain I did not seek or cry.

3
My hungry Soul he fill'd with Good;
He in his Bottle put my tears,
My smarting wounds washt in his blood,
And banisht thence my Doubts and fears.

4
What to my Saviour shall I give
Who freely hath done this for me?
I'll serve him here whilst I shall live
And Loue him to Eternity.

To My Dear and Loving Husband

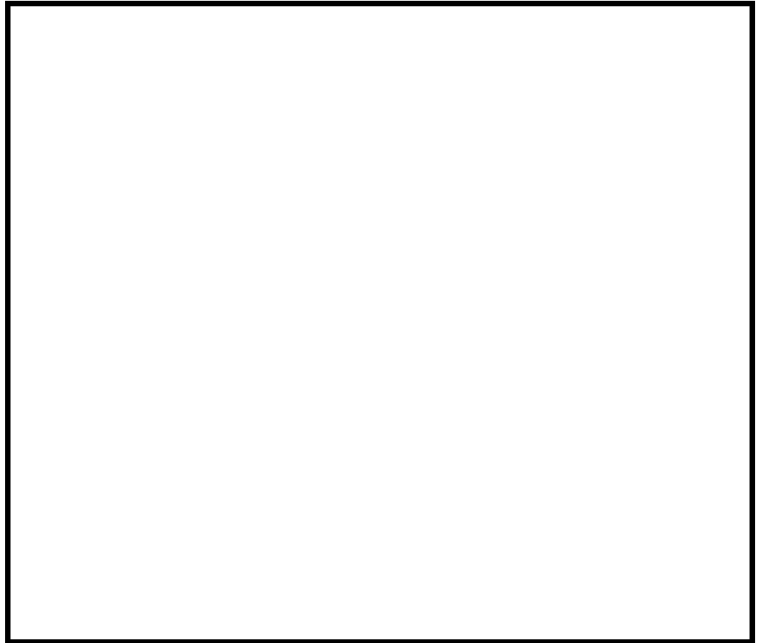
If ever two were one, then surely we.
If ever man were loved by wife, then thee.
If ever wife was happy in a man,
Compare with me, ye women, if you can.
I prize thy love more than whole mines of gold,
Or all the riches that the East doth hold.
My love is such that rivers cannot quench,
Nor ought but love from thee give recompense.
Thy love is such I can no way repay;
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.

Poetry Study

Title:

Type of Poem:

Use the box to at right to draw a picture of what the poem brings to mind.



Write one thing you liked and did not like about the poem:

Write three adjectives about the poem.

Compose a few lines of your own poem inspired by this work
