

HERE FOLLOW SOME VERSES UPON THE BURNING OF OUR HOUSE, JULY 10, 1666

by Anne Bradstreet

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. **A**
5 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
10 And not to leave me succorless.¹
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,²
15 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;³ **B**
He might of all justly bereft⁴
20 But yet sufficient for us left.
When by the ruins oft I past
My sorrowing eyes aside did cast, **C**
And here and there the places spy
Where oft I sat and long did lie:



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A READING FOCUS

Circle examples of **inversion** in lines 1–4.

B LANGUAGE COACH

Read the footnote for *repine*. Think of an **antonym** for *repine*. An antonym is a word that has the opposite meaning as another word.

C VOCABULARY

Word Study

Cast has multiple meanings. Which meaning of the word is used here? Use a dictionary if you need help.

1. **succorless** (SUHK UHR LIHS): without aid or assistance; helpless.
2. **that gave and took**: allusion to Job 1:21, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."
3. **repine**: to complain worriedly; to be displeased.
4. **bereft**: taken away; deprived.

A VOCABULARY

Selection Vocabulary

Vanity means "something valueless." What is the speaker identifying as valueless?

B READING FOCUS

Circle one example of **inversion** on this page and rewrite the line in a normal order below.



The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Gift of Samuel Bradstreet, 1919.
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25 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,
30 Nor at thy table eat a bit.
No pleasant tale shall e'er⁵ 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.
35 In silence ever shall thou lie,
Adieu, Adieu, all's vanity. **A**
Then straight I 'gin⁶ my heart to chide,
And did thy wealth on earth abide?⁷
Didst fix thy hope on mold'ring dust?
40 The arm of flesh didst make thy trust?
Raise up thy thoughts above the sky
That dunghill mists away may fly. **B**

5. e'er: ever.

6. gin: begin.

7. abide: to live, as in a place; to endure or tolerate.

Thou hast an house on high erect,
Framed by that mighty Architect, **C**
45 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
50 Yet by His gift is made thine own;
There's wealth enough, I need no more,
Farewell, my pelf,⁸ farewell my store.
The world no longer let me love,
My hope and treasure lies above. **D**

C LITERARY FOCUS

In this **metaphor**, who is the "mighty Architect"? What clues help you to figure this out?

D VOCABULARY

Academic Vocabulary

Based on this poem, do you think religion was an important *aspect*, or part, of Puritan society? Why or why not?

8. **pelf**: wealth or worldly goods (sometimes said with contempt).