

Remaining faithful through hardship



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In Anne Bradstreet's poem "Here Follows Some Verses upon the Burning of Our House July 10th, 1666," the narrator voices her disbelief in the wake of a fire that destroyed her home, as well as her feelings of the loss. During the timeframe that Bradstreet wrote this poem, many if not most Americans were of puritan faith. They practiced a belief that a person must always be prepared for judgment day as it could happen at any moment. This poem is a clear reiteration of her the author's faith and it calls to mind my experience in church and listening to the minister's proclamations of what it meant to be faithful.

It is both sad and reassuring as it ponders the true meaning of Christ's sacrifice and the duty of faith that she believed in. In this poem, Bradstreet uses the burning of her house as a way to clarify and reinforce her faith. In line five, she writes, 'fearful sound of "fire" and "fire,"' referring to the fires of hell as she awakens to her house burning down and believes it is judgment day. The line, "Let no man know is my Desire" (6), reveals that she secretly longs for judgment day but does not want to let anyone know of her longing.

She cries out for God's aid in hard times with the words, "to my God my heart did cry / To straighten me in my Distress / And not to leave me succourless" (8-10). The burning of her house is a test of her faith and during the fire, she turns to Him for comfort, asking Him to be her succour, or the one she can depend on in times of trouble. Bradstreet makes it clear that she believed all her worldly possessions did not belong to her but to God himself, as did all of her being. This is evident in lines seventeen and eighteen, "It was His own, it was not mine, / Far be it that I should repine.

” She outright says that her belongings and everything she owns does not belong to her though she owned them in the world. She tells herself that she should not mourn them since they belong to God and have been returned to Him. Throughout the poem, Bradstreet struggles to let go of her worldly possessions and turn to God. All the while, she is accepting of the hardship she goes through and does not question what she sees as God’s actions. Even while she knows that her belongings in truth belong to God, she has a hard time letting go of her worldly items, as made clear throughout the poem.

She enumerates everything she was no longer able to do, everything her house would not see, such as, “ Under thy roof no guest shall sit, / Nor at thy Table eat a bit” (19-20). As she struggles to find acceptance and she asks herself if she is tied to her worldly things, “ And did thy wealth on earth abide? / Didst fix thy hope on mould'ring dust? / The arm of flesh didst make thy trust? ” (38-40). She expresses doubt in her faith and is appalled by her own yearning for her material things. Yet her faith is reinforced as she answers her own questions, “ Raise up thy thoughts above the sky / .

. . It’s purchased and paid for too / By Him who hath enough to do” (41-49). Bradstreet believes that Christ has paid for her sins and paid for her way to heaven and she reminds herself to believe in His world rather than her own as long as her faith remained true. This was a deviation from puritan faith in that the general belief was that man went to heaven based on their own faith and actions rather than the opinion expressed in this poem, that Christ had already paid their way to heaven and man merely had to remain true in him belief.