

Poems presented in Class 5

Anne Bradstreet: *On the Burning of Our House*

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 straighten me in my Distress
And not to leave me succourless.
Then, coming out, behold 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 sate and long did lie.
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,
Nor at thy Table eat a bit.
No pleasant talk shall 'ere 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 shalt 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 mould'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.

Anne Bradstreet: 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 persevere,
That when we live no more, we may live ever.

Anne Bradstreet: from *Contemplations*

Then higher on the glistering Sun I gaz'd,
Whose beams was shaded by the leafy Tree.
The more I look'd, the more I grew amaz'd
And softly said, what glory's like to thee?
Soul of this world, this Universe's Eye,
No wonder some made thee a Deity:
Had I not better known (alas) the same had I.

Anne Bradstreet: from *In Honour of... Queen Elizabeth*

No memories, nor volumes can contain,
The nine Olymp'ades of her happy reign,
Who was so good, so just, so learn'd, so wise,
From all the Kings on earth she won the prize.
Nor say I more than truly is her due.
Millions will testify that this is true.
She hath wip'd off th' aspersion of her Sex,
That women wisdom lack to play the Rex.

Phillis Wheatley: *On Being Brought from Africa to America*

'Twas mercy brought me from my Pagan land,
Taught my benighted soul to understand
That there's a God, that there's a Saviour too:
Once I redemption neither sought nor knew.
Some view our sable race with scornful eye,
"Their colour is a diabolic die."
Remember, Christians, Negros, black as Cain,
May be refin'd, and join th' angelic train.

Phillis Wheatley: *To the... Earl of Dartmouth*

Hail, happy day, when, smiling like the morn,
Fair Freedom rose New-England to adorn:
The northern clime beneath her genial ray,
Dartmouth, congratulates thy blissful sway:
Elate with hope her race no longer mourns,
Each soul expands, each grateful bosom burns,
While in thine hand with pleasure we behold

The silken reins, and Freedom's charms unfold.
Long lost to realms beneath the northern skies

She shines supreme, while hated faction dies:
Soon as appear'd the Goddess long desir'd,
Sick at the view, she languish'd and expir'd;
Thus from the splendors of the morning light
The owl in sadness seeks the caves of night.
No more, America, in mournful strain
Of wrongs, and grievance unredress'd complain,
No longer shalt thou dread the iron chain,
Which wanton Tyranny with lawless hand
Had made, and with it meant t' enslave the land.

Should you, my lord, while you peruse my song,
Wonder from whence my love of Freedom sprung,
Whence flow these wishes for the common good,
By feeling hearts alone best understood,
I, young in life, by seeming cruel fate
Was snatch'd from Afric's fancy'd happy seat:
What pangs excruciating must molest,
What sorrows labour in my parent's breast?
Steel'd was that soul and by no misery mov'd
That from a father seiz'd his babe belov'd:
Such, such my case. And can I then but pray
Others may never feel tyrannic sway?

For favours past, great Sir, our thanks are due,
And thee we ask thy favours to renew,
Since in thy pow'r, as in thy will before,
To sooth the griefs, which thou did'st once deplore.
May heav'nly grace the sacred sanction give
To all thy works, and thou for ever live
Not only on the wings of fleeting Fame,
Though praise immortal crowns the patriot's name,
But to conduct to heav'ns refulgent fane,
May fiery coursers sweep th' ethereal plain,
And bear thee upwards to that blest abode,
Where, like the prophet, thou shalt find thy God.

Julia Ward Howe: *Coquette et Froide*

What is thy thought of me?
What is thy feeling?
Lov'st thou the veil of sense,
Or its revealing?

Leav'st thou the maiden rose
Drooping and blushing,
Or rend'st its bosom with
Kissing and crushing?

I would be beautiful
That thou should'st woo me,
Gentle, delightful, but
To draw thee to me.

Yet should thy longing eye
Ever caress me,
And quickened Fantasy
Only, possess me,

Thus thy heart's highest need
Long would I cherish,
Lest its more trivial wish
Pall, and then perish.

Would that Love's fond pursuit
Were crownèd never,
Or that his virgin kiss
Lasted for ever!

Julia Ward Howe: *Battle Hymn of the Republic*

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord:
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fatal lightning of his terrible swift sword:
His truth is marching on.

I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps;
They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps;
I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps.
His Day is marching on.

I have read a fiery gospel, writ in burnished rows of steel:
"As ye deal with my contemners, so with you my grace shall deal;
Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with his heel,
 Since God is marching on."

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before his judgment-seat:
Oh! be swift, my soul, to answer Him! be jubilant, my feet!
 Our God is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me:
As he died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,
 While God is marching on.

Julia Ward Howe: *Outside the Party*

Thick throng the snow-flakes, the evening is dreary,
Glad rings the music in yonder gay hall;
On her who listens here, friendless and weary,
Heavier chill than the winter's doth fall.

At yon clear window, light-opened before me,
Glances the face I have worshipped so well:
There's the fine gentleman, grand in his glory;
There, the fair smile by whose sweetness I fell.

This is akin to him, shunned and forsaken,
That at my bosom sobs low, without bread;
Had not such pleading my marble heart shaken,
I had been quiet, long since, with the dead.

Oh! Could I enter there, ghastly and squalid,
Stand in men's eyes with my spirit o'erborne,
Show them where roses bloomed, crushed now and pallid,
What he found innocent, leaving forlorn,—

How the fair ladies would fail from their dances,
Trembling, aghast at my horrible tale!
How would he shrink from my words and my glances!
How would they shrink from him, swooning and pale!

This is the hair that was soft to enchain him;
Snakelike, it snarls on my beautiless brow:
These are the hands that were fond to detain him
With a sense-magic then, powerless now!

No: could I come, like a ghost, to affright him,
How should that heal my wound, silence my pain?
Had I the wrath of God's lightning to smite him,
That could not bring me my lost peace again.

Ne'er let him grieve while good fortunes betide him,
Ne'er count again the poor game lost of old;
When he comes forth, with his young bride beside him,
Here shall they find us both, dead in the cold.