**Anne Bradstreet ‘The Prologue’**

Anne Bradstreet was born Anne Dudley in 1612 in Northamptonshire, England. She married Simon Bradstreet, a graduate of Cambridge University, at the age of 16**.** she was the first poets to write English verse in the [American colonies](https://www.britannica.com/topic/American-colonies). Long considered primarily of historical interest, she won critical acceptance in the 20th century as a writer of enduring verse, particularly for her sequence of religious poems, “Contemplations,” written for her family and not published until the mid-19th century.

**Anne Bradstreet** describes how as a writer she is not going to try to attempt to write about these three important things; of Wars, of Captains and of Kings . She adds to this by saying that she will also stay away from the beginnings of civilizations and cities. These are wide-ranging topics which at a time, were some of the most popular to write about. She says that from her pen specifically, these things are “to superior“.

As a woman, she believes that she should leave these “superior things to men. “Let poets and historian set these forth“. She believes that as a woman she is lacking something that allows men to write successfully about these historical topics. She does not go into detail about what these things are exactly.

In the second stanza she expresses her dissatisfaction displeasure in the fact that she was not given the same skills as other people were to write successfully about large important topics. She would like to have the ability to do justice to these periods of history that she’s interested in. She believes that the “Muses” did not give her what she needs to write successfully. The word “Muses” refers to Greek [mythology](https://poemanalysis.com/genre/myth/) and the belief that there were goddesses of the arts and sciences who bestowed abilities onto the lucky few.  One person that she compares herself against is Guillaume du Bartas a French Protestant poet.

By alluding to this specific writer, the poet reveals to the reader that this is the kind of writer that she would like to be. She admires the kind of works that he completed. In the fifth and sixth lines of this stanza, the [speaker](https://poemanalysis.com/diction/speaker-in-poetry/) says that she’s going to do what she will “according to” her “skill”.

In the third Stanza she outlines about her poor and scanty skills. as a poet she is contented with her own limited skills. Just as we don’t expect a young boy to write impressive words so too does society not expect a woman like Anne Bradstreet to write as a male poet would. here is a “main defect“ in the poet’s nature. She is a woman. This means that she is always going to have the lowest of expectations set for her. Whatever the muses gave her, it was not very much.

In the fourth Stanza she is in the state of allusion speaking about Demosthenes, a Greek. He was an orator famous for having overcome a [speech](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/dialogue/) impediment. In the same way as he worked to overcome his speech impediment, Bradstreet worked to become a poet in a male-dominated world. She may see herself as less in some ways but she has made an accomplishment that shouldn’t be overlooked. The poet pushed through the “pain” just as much as he did.

She confess that she’s not entirely sure that the power of “Art can do much” for her. The poet returns to the idea that she is lacking in some way that this man, and other men, are not. She uses the words “weak” and “wounded” in the last line of this stanza when speaking about her own brain. This is a trouble depiction of the poet’s mind, but one that a reader should consider in full. This is how most men, and many women of her time saw themselves.

In the fifth stanza she mentions about her criticism that she is “obnoxious” to some. There are many, as mentioned above, who don’t believe that a woman should write. They think her hand would “better fit” a sewing needle. The men who speak about her this way believe she is going to mess up poetry in some way. This isn’t something that’s specifically targeted at Bradstreet but at all women who try to step out of their predetermined roles.

Her success is not going to make the people realise or admit that they were wrong. Her writing could be as good as a man’s but she’s never going to get the credit that she deserves. They will say that she was successful by “chance”.

In the sixth stanzashe is back in Greek mythology referring tothe “nine” muses. She believes that the Greeks were better than today’s men in this very obvious way. They knew that women had something to give to the arts and sciences and therefore made them the muses and not men. A reader should make sure to take note of the use of [enjambment](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/enjambment/) in this stanza and in other stanzas that flow throughout the poem. There is a good example between the second line and the third in stanza six.

The poet believes, despite what feels like a good argument that the stronger “male” brains will “untie”. They will soon find a way around her idea about the muses. They’ll say something like the Greeks were “fools” and liars.

In the seventh stanza Bradstreet says that Greeks should be Greeks and women should be women. There is no way to change one’s nature. Men are going to have “precedency” and outperform their female counterparts, that’s just the way the world is, she says. She doesn’t believe a war fought to change this fact would result in anything.

Commenting on men directly she tells them that they are smarter. They’re always going be in charge, but she would like some “small acknowledgment of ours,” of women’s successes.

The last stanza has a good example of [anaphora](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/anaphora/) in the first two lines of the stanza with the word “And”. This word starts both lines as the poet brings the poem to a conclusion. She uses a [metaphor](https://poemanalysis.com/figurative-language/metaphor/) to call the men “high flown quills” in the first line. The poet is showing off some of her skills using techniques like [internal rhyme](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/internal-rhyme/) to finish the poem off strongly.

Bradstreet is proving the opposite of her conciliatory agreement with men. She can write, as well or better than any man of her time or any time.

She asks that if the high flying men ever take the time to read her [verse](https://poemanalysis.com/definition/verse/) that they treat it accordingly. The poet isn’t looking for anything grand, just a simple acknowledgment is all. In the final two lines, she suggests that her poetry is “ore” next to the “gold” of male poetry. This is meant to pacify the men who might’ve been upset by her desire to write at all. But it also ends the poem with a clever bang, once again showing off her skill.