

The Works of Anne Bradstreet, ed. Jeannine
Hensley (Cambridge: Harvard University
Press, 1967)

TO THE MEMORY OF MY DEAR
AND EVER HONOURED FATHER
THOMAS DUDLEY ESQ.
WHO DECEASED, JULY 31, 1653,
AND OF HIS AGE 77

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By duty bound and not by custom led
To celebrate the praises of the dead,
My mournful mind, sore pressed, in trembling verse
Presents my lamentations at his hearse,
Who was my father, guide, instructor too, 10
To whom I ought whatever I could do.
Nor is't relation near my hand shall tie;
For who more cause to boast his worth than I?
Who heard or saw, observed or knew him better?
Or who alive than I a greater debtor? 15
Let malice bite and envy gnaw its fill,
He was my father, and I'll praise him still.
Nor was his name or life lead so obscure
That pity might some trumpeters procure
Who after death might make him falsely seem 20
Such as in life no man could justly deem.
Well known and loved, where e'er he lived, by most
Both in his native and in foreign coast,
These to the world his merits could make known,
So needs no testimonial from his own; 25
But now or never I must pay my sum;
While others tell his worth, I'll not be dumb.
One of thy Founders, him New England know,
Who stayed thy feeble sides when thou wast low,
Who spent his state, his strength and years with care 30
That after-comers in them might have share.
True patriot of this little commonweal,

Who is't can tax thee ought, but for thy zeal?
 Truth's friend thou wert, to errors still a foe,
 Which caused apostates to malign so. 35
 Thy love to true religion e'er shall shine;
 My father's God, be God of me and mine.
 Upon the earth he did not build his nest,
 But as a pilgrim, what he had, possessed.
 High thoughts he gave no harbour in his heart, 40
 Nor honours puffed him up when he had part;
 Those titles loathed, which some too much do love,
 For truly his ambition lay above.
 His humble mind so loved humility,
 He left it to his race for legacy; 45
 And oft and oft with speeches mild and wise
 Gave his in charge that jewel rich to prize.
 No ostentation seen in all his ways,
 As in the mean ones of our foolish days,
 Which all they have and more still set to view, 50
 Their greatness may be judged by what they shew.
 His thoughts were more sublime, his actions wise,
 Such vanities he justly did despise.
 Nor wonder 'twas, low things ne'er much did move
 For he a mansion had, prepared above, 55
 For which he sighed and prayed and longed full sore
 He might be clothed upon for evermore.
 Oft spake of death, and with a smiling cheer
 He did exult his end was drawing near;
 Now fully ripe, as shock of wheat that's grown, 60
 Death as a sickle hath him timely mown,
 And in celestial barn hath housed him high,
 Where storms, nor show'rs, nor ought can damnify.
 His generation served, his labours cease;
 And to his fathers gathered is in peace. 65
 Ah happy soul, 'mongst saints and angels blest,
 Who after all his toil is now at rest.

His hoary head in righteousness was found;
 As joy in heaven, on earth let praise resound. 70
 Forgotten never be his memory,
 His blessing rest on his posterity;
 His pious footsteps, followed by his race,
 At last will bring us to that happy place
 Where we with joy each other's face shall see,
 And parted more by death shall never be. 75

His Epitaph

Within this tomb a patriot lies
 That was both pious, just, and wise,
 To truth a shield, to right a wall,
 To sectaries a whip and maul,
 A magazine of history,
 A prizer of good company,
 In manners pleasant and severe;
 The good him loved, the bad did fear,
 And when his time with years was spent,
 If some rejoiced, more did lament.