

Name: _____ Class: _____

To My Dear and Loving Husband

By Anne Bradstreet
1678

Anne Bradstreet (née Dudley; 1612-1672) was the most famous of early English poets in her time and the first published female writer in the British-North American colonies. Addressed to Bradstreet's husband, the poem depicts the intimacy of a couple deeply in love. As you read, take notes on the structure and themes of the piece—how does the narrator describe their relationship?

- [1] 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.
- [5] I prize thy love more than whole mines of gold,
Or all the riches that the East¹ doth hold.
My love is such that rivers cannot quench,
Nor ought but love from thee give recompense.²
Thy love is such I can no way repay;
- [10] The heavens reward thee manifold, I pray.
Then while we live, in love let's so persever,³
That when we live no more we may live ever.



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1. i.e. the Eastern world, a term which refers to a wide variety of cultures, socio-political systems, economies, and so on belonging to countries east of Europe (though this geographic definition is not exact, for certain places like Australia are considered more part of the Western world). In Bradstreet's time, the "East" was considered a source of riches as well as exoticism.
2. compensate, make amends
3. An alternative spelling of "persevere" that forces an accent over the 2nd "e," so as to maintain the rhyme scheme.

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. Consider the structural similarities of the first 3 lines. What do these similarities contribute to the piece?
 - A. The repetition of “If ever... then...” emphasizes the narrator’s stern tone, as the speaker tries to get her argument across.
 - B. The repetition of “If ever... then...” creates a humorous and light tone, as the narrator flirts with an unknown acquaintance.
 - C. The repetition of “If ever... then...” creates a serious and solemn tone, as the narrator confesses to her emotional confusion.
 - D. The repetition of “If ever... then...” emphasizes the narrator’s message of love as a commitment, similar to the repetition found in wedding vows.

2. PART A: What does the term “recompense” most likely mean, as used in line 8?
 - A. to substitute for
 - B. to satisfy
 - C. to make up for
 - D. to swap for

3. PART B: Which line from the poem best supports the answer to Part A?
 - A. “I prize thy love more than whole mines of gold”
 - B. “My love is such that rivers cannot quench”
 - C. “Thy love is such I can no way repay”
 - D. “Then while we live, in love let’s so persevere”

4. Which of the following statements best summarizes the imagery used in the poem?
 - A. The poet compares her love to grand parts of nature, such as rivers and gold mines.
 - B. The poet compares her love to being of more worth than all of the material wealth found in parts of the world, such as the East and in gold mines.
 - C. The poet describes her love as transcending death and bringing their souls together as one.
 - D. The poet uses a combination of natural, material, and spiritual imagery when describing her love, making her feelings seem larger than all three.

5. Which of the following best describes the poet’s purpose?
 - A. To profess the depths of her love to her husband and the unity she feels with him.
 - B. To explain how lost she would be without him in her life.
 - C. To extol the virtues and joys of love within the institution of marriage.
 - D. To describe and praise her husband’s many attractive qualities and virtues.

6. How does the rhyme scheme of the poem contribute to the tone?
