

Study Questions for “Upon the Burning of Our House”

1. How many syllables per line?
2. What would you call this rhythmic pattern?
3. What is the rhyme scheme employed by Bradstreet?
4. What is Bradstreet’s first reaction to the fire (lines 7 – 10)?
5. What is her second reaction (lines 11 – 15)?
6. What can you surmise about this woman from this reaction?
7. How is she able to thank God for burning her house down (line 17)?
8. Lines 21 – 36 occur at some later point in time after the fire. Bradstreet is walking by the ruins of her house.

How does Bradstreet feel as she walks by?

What material items does she miss in particular?

9. What is the literal translation of “adieu”? (It goes beyond, but is related to, “goodbye”. It helps if you know French.) Why does that matter?

10. Do you recognize the Biblical allusion in the phrase “all’s vanity”?

11. In lines 43 – 50, Bradstreet thinks about another house that she hopes to one day inhabit. Where is this house? Who is the “Mighty Architect” who designed it?

12. Who “purchased and paid for” the house in question? What was the price?