

1. Why are the birth of her child and Bradstreet's own death so closely linked in "Before the Birth of One of Her Children?" How does the high probability that she will die giving birth influence Bradstreet's thinking?
2. How does Bradstreet's poem "To My Dear and Loving Husband" compare to the image of the Puritans as cold and heartless people?

3-8 Selections from the New England Primer of 1683

In 1647 Massachusetts passed a law requiring all towns with populations greater than 50 to open public schools for the basic education of the towns' children in reading, writing, and mathematics. Many of the towns in the other New England colonies opened schools as well. The following is an excerpt from the 1683 edition of the New England Primer, the standard reader in colonial schoolhouses used to teach both literacy and religious tenets.

SOURCE: Paul Lauler et al., eds., The Heath Anthology of American Literature (1990), pp. 308-310.

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| | N | |
| A | In Adam's Fall
We Sinned all. | <i>Nighlengales</i> sing In time of Spring.
<i>The Royal Oak</i> |
| B | Thy Life to Mend
This Book Attend. | O it was the Tree That
sav'd His Royal
Majestic. |
| C | The Cat doth play
And after slay. | <i>Peter</i> denies
His Lord and cries
<i>Queen Esther</i> comes |
| D | A Dog will bite
A Thief at night. | Q in Royal State To Save the
JEWS from dismal Fate |
| E | An eagle's flight
Is out of sight. | <i>Rachel</i> doth mourn For
her first born. |
| F | The Idle Fool
Is whipt at School. | <i>Samuel</i> anoints Whom God
S appoints. |
| G | As runs the Glass
Man's life doth pass. | <i>Time</i> cuts down all Both great
and small. <i>Uriah's</i> beauteous
Wife |
| H | My Book and Heart
Shall never part. | U Made David seek his Life. |

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| J | <i>Job</i> feels the Rod Yet
blesses GOD. | W <i>Whales</i> in the Sea God's
Voice obey. |
| K | Our KING the
good No man of
blood. | X <i>Xerxes</i> the great did
die. And so must you & I. |
| L | The <i>Lion</i> bold
The <i>Lamb</i> doth hold. | Y <i>Youth</i> forward slips Death
soonest nips. |
| M | The <i>Moon</i> gives light
In time of night. | Z <i>Zacheus</i> he
Did climb the Tree His Lord to see. |
- Now the Child being entred in his Letters and Spelling, let him learn these and such like Sentences by Heart, whereby he will be both instructed in his Duty, and encouraged in his Learning.

The Dutiful Child's Promises

I will fear GOD, and honour the KING. I will honour my Father & Mother. I will Obey my Superiours. I will Submit to my Elders, I will Love my Friends. I will hate no Man.
I will forgive my Enemies, and pray to God for them. I will as much as in me lies keep all God's Holy Com- mandments.
I will learn my Catechism. I will keep the Lord's Day Holy. I will Reverence God's Sanctuary, For our GOD is a consuming Fire.

Verses

I in the Burying Place may see
Graves shorter there than I; From
Death's Arrest no Age is free.
Young Children too may die; My
God, may such an awful Sight,
Awakening be to me! Oh! that
by early Grace I might
For Death prepared be.