

Contemplations (for soprano, flute, cello, and piano)
Texts by Anne Bradstreet

I.

I wist not what to wish, yet sure thought I,
If so much excellence abide below,
How excellent is he that dwells on high?
Whose power and beauty by his works we know.
Sure he is goodness, wisdom, glory, light,
That hath this under world so richly dight.
More Heaven than Earth was here, no winter and no night.

II.

I heard the merry grasshopper then sing,
The black clad Cricket bear a second part.
They kept one tune and played on the same string,
Seeming to glory in their little Art.
Shall creatures abject thus their voices raise
And in their kind resound their maker's praise
Whilst I, as mute, can warble forth no higher lays?

III.

Under the cooling shadow of a stately Elm
Close sat I by a goodly River's side,
Where gliding streams the Rocks did overwhelm.
A lonely place, with pleasures dignifi'd.
I once that lov'd the shady woods so well,
Now thought the rivers did the trees excel,
And if the sun would ever shine, there would I dwell.

IV.

Sometimes in Eden fair he seems to be,
See glorious Adam there made Lord of all,
Fancies the Apple dangle on the Tree
That turn'd his Sovereign to a naked thrall,
Who like a miscreant's driven from that place
To get his bread with pain and sweat of face.
A penalty impos'd on his backsliding Race.

V.

O merry Bird (said I) that fears no snares,
That neither toils nor hoards up in thy barn,
Feels no sad thoughts nor cruciating cares
To gain more good or shun what might thee harm--
Thy clothes ne'er wear, thy meat is everywhere,
Thy bed a bough, thy drink the water clear--
Reminds not what is past, nor what's to come dost fear.

The dawning morn with songs thou dost prevent,
Sets hundred notes unto thy feathered crew,
So each one tunes his pretty instrument
And warbling out the old, begin anew,
And thus they pass their youth in summer season,
Then follow thee into a better Region,
Where winter's never felt by that sweet airy legion.