1996 Poem: “The Author to Her Book” (Anne Bradstreet)

**Prompt:** Read carefully the following poem by the colonial American poet, Anne Bradstreet. Then write a well-organized essay in which you discuss how the poem’s controlling metaphor expresses the complex attitude of the speaker.

“The Author to Her Book” by Anne Bradstreet

Thou ill-form’d offspring of my feeble brain,

Who after birth did’st by my side remain,

Till snatcht from thence by friends, less wise than true

Who thee abroad, expos’d to publick view;

Made thee in rags, halting to th’ press to trudge,

Where errors were not lessened (all may judge)

At thy return my blushing was not small,

My rambling brat (in print) should mother call,

I cast thee by as one unfit for light,

Thy visage was so irksome in my sight;

Yet being mine own, at length affection would

Thy blemishes amend, if so I could:

I wash’d thy face, but more defects I saw,

And rubbing off a spot, still made a flaw.

I stretcht thy joints to make thee even feet,

Yet still thou run’st more hobbling than is meet;

In better dress to trim thee was my mind,

But nought save home-spun cloth, i’ th’ house I find.

In this array, ‘mongst vulgars mayst thou roam

In critics hands, beware thou dost not come;

And take thy way where yet thou art not known,

If for thy father askt, say, thou hadst none:

And for thy mother, she alas is poor,

Which caus’d her thus to send thee out of door.