

The Night-wind

Emily Bronte

In summer's mellow midnight,
A cloudless moon shone through
Our open parlour window,
And rose-trees wet with dew.

I sat in silent musing;
The soft wind waved my hair;
It told me heaven was glorious,
And sleeping earth was fair.

I needed not its breathing
To bring such thoughts to me;
But still it whispered lowly,
How dark the woods will be!

"The thick leaves in my murmur
Are rustling like a dream,
And all their myriad voices
Instinct with spirit seem."

I said, "Go, gentle singer,
Thy wooing voice is kind:
But do not think its music
Has power to reach my mind.

"Play with the scented flower,
The young tree's supple bough,
And leave my human feelings
In their own course to flow."

The wanderer would not heed me;
Its kiss grew warmer still.
"O come!" it sighed so sweetly;
"I'll win thee 'gainst thy will.

"Were we not friends from childhood?
Have I not loved thee long?
As long as thou, the solemn night,
Whose silence wakes my song.

"And when thy heart is resting
Beneath the church-aisle stone,
I shall have time for mourning,
And THOU for being alone."

In these stanzas a louder gale has roused the sleeper on her pillow: the wakened soul struggles to blend with the storm by which it is swayed:--

Ay--there it is! it wakes to-night
Deep feelings I thought dead;
Strong in the blast--quick gathering light--
The heart's flame kindles red.

"Now I can tell by thine altered cheek,
And by thine eyes' full gaze,
And by the words thou scarce dost speak,
How wildly fancy plays.

"Yes--I could swear that glorious wind
Has swept the world aside,
Has dashed its memory from thy mind
Like foam-bells from the tide:

"And thou art now a spirit pouring
Thy presence into all:
The thunder of the tempest's roaring,
The whisper of its fall:

"An universal influence,
From thine own influence free;
A principle of life--intense--
Lost to mortality.

"Thus truly, when that breast is cold,
Thy prisoned soul shall rise;
The dungeon mingle with the mould--
The captive with the skies.
Nature's deep being, thine shall hold,
Her spirit all thy spirit fold,
Her breath absorb thy sighs.
Mortal! though soon life's tale is told;
Who once lives, never dies!"