

**The Prisoner; A fragment.**

BY EMILY BRONTË

In the dungeon-crypts idly did I stray,  
 Reckless of the lives wasting there away;  
 "Draw the ponderous bars! open, Warder stern!"  
 He dared not say me nay--the hinges harshly turn.

"Our guests are darkly lodged," I whisper'd, gazing through  
 The vault, whose grated eye showed heaven more gray than blue;  
 (This was when glad Spring laughed in awaking pride;)   
 "Ay, darkly lodged enough!" returned my sullen guide.

Then, God forgive my youth; forgive my careless tongue;  
 I scoffed, as the chill chains on the damp flagstones rung:  
 "Confined in triple walls, art thou so much to fear,  
 That we must bind thee down and clench thy fetters here?"

The captive raised her face; it was as soft and mild  
 As sculptured marble saint, or slumbering unwean'd child;  
 It was so soft and mild, it was so sweet and fair,  
 Pain could not trace a line, nor grief a shadow there!

The captive raised her hand and pressed it to her brow;  
 "I have been struck," she said, "and I am suffering now;  
 Yet these are little worth, your bolts and irons strong;  
 And, were they forged in steel, they could not hold me long."

Hoarse laughed the jailor grim: "Shall I be won to hear;  
 Dost think, fond, dreaming wretch, that I shall grant thy prayer?  
 Or, better still, wilt melt my master's heart with groans?  
 Ah! sooner might the sun thaw down these granite stones.

"My master's voice is low, his aspect bland and kind,  
 But hard as hardest flint the soul that lurks behind;  
 And I am rough and rude, yet not more rough to see  
 Than is the hidden ghost that has its home in me."

About her lips there played a smile of almost scorn,  
 "My friend," she gently said, "you have not heard me mourn;  
 When you my kindred's lives, MY lost life, can restore,  
 Then may I weep and sue,--but never, friend, before!

"Still, let my tyrants know, I am not doomed to wear  
 Year after year in gloom, and desolate despair;  
 A messenger of Hope comes every night to me,  
 And offers for short life, eternal liberty.

"He comes with western winds, with evening's wandering airs,  
 With that clear dusk of heaven that brings the thickest stars.  
 Winds take a pensive tone, and stars a tender fire,  
 And visions rise, and change, that kill me with desire.

"Desire for nothing known in my maturer years,  
 When Joy grew mad with awe, at counting future tears.  
 When, if my spirit's sky was full of flashes warm,  
 I knew not whence they came, from sun or thunder-storm.

"But, first, a hush of peace--a soundless calm descends;  
 The struggle of distress, and fierce impatience ends;  
 Mute music soothes my breast--unuttered harmony,  
 That I could never dream, till Earth was lost to me.

"Then dawns the Invisible; the Unseen its truth reveals;  
 My outward sense is gone, my inward essence feels:  
 Its wings are almost free--its home, its harbour found,  
 Measuring the gulph, it stoops and dares the final bound,

"Oh I dreadful is the check--intense the agony--  
 When the ear begins to hear, and the eye begins to see;  
 When the pulse begins to throb, the brain to think again;  
 The soul to feel the flesh, and the flesh to feel the chain.

"Yet I would lose no sting, would wish no torture less;  
 The more that anguish racks, the earlier it will bless;  
 And robed in fires of hell, or bright with heavenly shine,  
 If it but herald death, the vision is divine!"

She ceased to speak, and we, unanswering, turned to go--  
 We had no further power to work the captive woe:  
 Her cheek, her gleaming eye, declared that man had given  
 A sentence, unapproved, and overruled by Heaven.

### **Some May Hate**

BY EMILY BRONTË

WELL, some may hate, and some may scorn,  
 And some may quite forget thy name;  
 But my sad heart must ever mourn  
 Thy ruined hopes, thy blighted fame!  
 'Twas thus I thought, an hour ago,  
 Even weeping o'er that wretch's woe;  
 One word turned back my gushing tears,  
 And lit my altered eye with sneers.  
 Then, 'Bless the friendly dust', I said,  
 'That hides thy unlamented head!  
 Vain as thou wert, and weak as vain,  
 The slave of Falsehood, Pride, and Pain—  
 My heart has nought akin to thine;  
 Thy soul is powerless over mine.'  
 But these were thoughts that vanished too;  
 Unwise, unholy, and untrue:  
 Do I despise the timid deer,  
 Because his limbs are fleet with fear?  
 Or, would I mock the wolf's death-howl,  
 Because his form is gaunt and foul?  
 Or, hear with joy the leveret's cry,  
 Because it cannot bravely die?  
 No! Then above his memory  
 Let Pity's heart as tender be;  
 Say, 'Earth lie lightly on that breast,  
 And, kind Heaven, grant that spirit rest!'

## Remembrance

BY EMILY BRONTË

Cold in the earth—and the deep snow piled above thee,  
Far, far removed, cold in the dreary grave!  
Have I forgot, my only Love, to love thee,  
Severed at last by Time's all-severing wave?

Now, when alone, do my thoughts no longer hover  
Over the mountains, on that northern shore,  
Resting their wings where heath and fern-leaves cover  
Thy noble heart forever, ever more?

Cold in the earth—and fifteen wild Decembers,  
From those brown hills, have melted into spring:  
Faithful, indeed, is the spirit that remembers  
After such years of change and suffering!

Sweet Love of youth, forgive, if I forget thee,  
While the world's tide is bearing me along;  
Other desires and other hopes beset me,  
Hopes which obscure, but cannot do thee wrong!

No later light has lightened up my heaven,  
No second morn has ever shone for me;  
All my life's bliss from thy dear life was given,  
All my life's bliss is in the grave with thee.

But, when the days of golden dreams had perished,  
And even Despair was powerless to destroy,  
Then did I learn how existence could be cherished,  
Strengthened, and fed without the aid of joy.

Then did I check the tears of useless passion—  
Weaned my young soul from yearning after thine;  
Sternly denied its burning wish to hasten  
Down to that tomb already more than mine.

And, even yet, I dare not let it languish,  
Dare not indulge in memory's rapturous pain;  
Once drinking deep of that divinest anguish,  
How could I seek the empty world again?