

# *Self-Interrogation*

*Emily Bronte*



"The evening passes fast away.  
'Tis almost time to rest;  
What thoughts has left the vanished day,  
What feelings in thy breast?

"The vanished day? It leaves a sense  
Of labour hardly done;  
Of little gained with vast expense—  
A sense of grief alone?

"Time stands before the door of Death,  
Upbraiding bitterly  
And Conscience, with exhaustless breath,  
Pours black reproach on me:

"And though I've said that Conscience lies  
And Time should Fate condemn;  
Still, sad Repentance clouds my eyes,  
And makes me yield to them!

"Then art thou glad to seek repose?  
Art glad to leave the sea,  
And anchor all thy weary woes  
In calm Eternity?

"Nothing regrets to see thee go—  
Not one voice sobs' farewell;  
And where thy heart has suffered so,  
Canst thou desire to dwell?"

"Alas! the countless links are strong  
That bind us to our clay;  
The loving spirit lingers long,  
And would not pass away!

"And rest is sweet, when laurelled fame  
Will crown the soldier's crest;  
But a brave heart, with a tarnished name,  
Would rather fight than rest.

"Well, thou hast fought for many a year,  
Hast fought thy whole life through,  
Hast humbled Falsehood, trampled Fear;  
What is there left to do?

"'Tis true, this arm has hotly striven,  
Has dared what few would dare;  
Much have I done, and freely given,  
But little learnt to bear!

"Look on the grave where thou must sleep  
Thy last, and strongest foe;  
It is endurance not to weep,  
If that repose seem woe.

"The long war closing in defeat—  
Defeat serenely borne,—  
Thy midnight rest may still be sweet,  
And break in glorious morn!"

