

The Broadview Anthology of
**VICTORIAN
POETRY**
AND POETIC THEORY



EDITED BY

THOMAS J. COLLINS

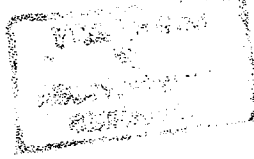
& VIVIENNE J. RUNDLE

ASSISTANT EDITORS: WAI YING LEE & KIRSTEN MUNRO

PR / 1223 / B68 / 1999

BROADVIEW ANTHOLOGIES OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

broadview press



AP 2/9/00

Its wings are almost free—its home, its harbour
found,
Measuring the gulf, it stoops, and dares the final
bound.

Oh, dreadful is the check—intense the agony—
When the ear begins to hear, and the eye begins to
see;
55 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,
60 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.
—1846 (1845)

"No coward soul is mine"¹

No coward soul is mine
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled
sphere
I see Heaven's glories shine
And Faith shines equal arming me from Fear
5 O God within my breast
Almighty ever-present Deity

¹ "The following are the last lines my sister Emily ever wrote."
(Charlotte Brontë's note.)

Life, that in me hast rest
As I Undying Life, have power in Thee

Vain are the thousand creeds
10 That move men's hearts, unutterably vain,
Worthless as withered weeds
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main

To waken doubt in one
Holding so fast by thy infinity
15 So surely anchored on
The steadfast rock of Immortality

With wide-embracing love
Thy spirit animates eternal years
Pervades and broods above,
20 Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates and rears

Though Earth and moon were gone
And suns and universes ceased to be
And thou wert left alone
Every Existence would exist in thee

25 There is not room for Death
Nor atom that his might could render void
Since thou art Being and Breath
And what thou art may never be destroyed.
—1850 (JANUARY 2, 1846)

*Stanzas—"Often rebuked,
yet always back returning"¹*

Oftentimes rebuked, yet always back returning
To those first feelings that were born with
And leaving busy chase of wealth and learning
For idle dreams of things which cannot be:

¹ The authorship of this poem has alternately been credited to Charlotte and Emily Brontë; there is no firm evidence for either claim.