

**POEMS BY CURRER,  
ELLIS, AND  
ACTON BELL**

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Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell by Emily Brontë & Charlotte Brontë & Anne Brontë

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**EMILY BRONTË & CHARLOTTE BRONTË & ANNE BRONTË**

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ELLIS, AND  
ACTON BELL**



# POEMS

BY

CURRER, ELLIS, AND ACTON

BELL.

AUTHORS OF

“JANE EYRE,” “WUTHERING HEIGHTS,” “TENANT  
OF WILDFELL HALL,” ETC.

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## POEMS.

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### PILATE'S WIFE'S DREAM.

I'vz quenched my lamp, I struck it in that start  
Which every limb convulsed, I heard it fall—  
The crash blent with my sleep, I saw depart  
Its light, even as I woke, on yonder wall ;  
Over against my bed, there shone a gleam  
Strange, faint, and mingling also with my dream.

It sunk, and I am wrapt in utter gloom ;  
How far is night advanced, and when will day  
Retinge the dusk and livid air with bloom,  
And fill this void with warm, creative ray ?  
Would I could sleep again till, clear and red,  
Morning shall on the mountain-tops be spread !

I'd call my women, but to break their sleep,  
Because my own is broken, were unjust ;



They've wrought all day, and well-earned slumbers  
steep

Their labours in forgetfulness, I trust ;  
Let me my feverish watch with patience bear,  
Thankful that none with me its sufferings share.

Yet, Oh, for light ! one ray would tranquillize  
My nerves, my pulses, more than effort can ;  
I'll draw my curtain and consult the skies :  
These trembling stars at dead of night look wan,  
Wild, restless, strange, yet cannot be more drear  
Than this my couch, shared by a nameless fear.

All black—one great cloud, drawn from east to west,  
Conceals the heavens, but there are lights below ;  
Torches burn in Jerusalem, and cast  
On yonder stony mount a lurid glow.  
I see men stationed there, and gleaming spears ;  
A sound, too, from afar, invades my ears.

Dull, measured strokes of axe and hammer ring  
From street to street, not loud, but through the  
night

Distinctly heard—and some strange spectral thing  
Is now upreared—and, fixed against the light  
Of the pale lamps ; defined upon that sky,  
It stands up like a column, straight and high.

I see it all—I know the dusky sign—  
A cross on Calvary, which Jews uprear

While Romans watch ; and when the dawn shall  
shine

Pilate, to judge the victim will appear,  
Pass sentence—yield him up to crucify ;  
And on that cross the spotless Christ must die.

Dreams, then, are true—for thus my vision ran ;  
Surely some oracle has been with me,  
The gods have chosen me to reveal their plan,  
To warn an unjust judge of destiny ;  
I, slumbering, heard and saw ; awake I know,  
Christ's coming death, and Pilate's life of woe.

I do not weep for Pilate—who could prove  
Regret for him whose cold and crushing sway  
No prayer can soften, no appeal can move ;  
Who tramples hearts as others trample clay,  
Yet with a faltering, an uncertain tread,  
That might stir up reprisal in the dead.

Forced to sit by his side and see his deeds ;  
Forced to behold that visage, hour by hour,  
In whose gaunt lines, the abhorrent gazer reads  
A triple lust of gold, and blood, and power ;  
A soul whom motives, fierce, yet abject, urge  
Rome's servile slave, and Judah's tyrant scourge.

How can I love, or mourn, or pity him ?  
I, who so long my fettered hands have wrung ;

I, who for grief have wept my eye-sight dim ;  
 Because, while life for me was bright and young,  
 He robbed my youth—he quenched my life's fair  
     ray—  
 He crushed my mind, and did my freedom slay.

And at this hour—although I be his wife—  
 He has no more of tenderness from me  
 Than any other wretch of guilty life ;  
 Less, for I know his household privacy—  
 I see him as he is—without a screen ;  
 And, by the gods, my soul abhors his mien !

Has he not sought my presence, dyed in blood—  
 Innocent, righteous blood, shed shamelessly ?  
 And have I not his red salute withstood ?  
 Aye,—when, as erst, he plunged all Galilee  
 In dark bereavement—in affliction sore,  
 Mingling their very offerings with their gore.

Then came he—in his eyes a serpent-smile,  
 Upon his lips some false, endearing word,  
 And, through the streets of Salem, clanged the  
     while,  
 His slaughtering, hacking, sacrilegious sword—  
 And I, to see a man cause men such woe,  
 Trembled with ire—I did not fear to show.

And now, the envious Jewish priests have brought  
 Jesus—whom they in mockery call their king—