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In the Bronte Country

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IN THE BRONTE COUNTRY

Emily's room looks out on the graves.
A sampler by each daughter fades
in the cupboard. The moss
would not leave her thoughts alone.
She tried to do what the moss
began. Moss will finish it.

On the moor a track wears deep
on the hillside; gorse leans in.
Water stands in the grass, in brown
pools on the soaked upland. Miles
from the sea, gulls drift over
that brown tide. Buffeted, they
leave in the air their international cry.

At Top Withens black stones
of the wall cling, stubborn, deaf.
To look far you have to ignore them.
The wind at your shoulder says over
and over, "I knew them all." In a stunned
second you are one of the rocks
and the heath has taken all your friends.

You understand what the bird that
followed you was saying. The wind
falls away and goes still. This earth
tells time by the stars, and is telling
you something:
this is the way the world will be, after.