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In Love with Jane Eyre

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In Love with *Jane Eyre*

Mary Dengler

Do I love *Jane Eyre* the book, or Rochester
In love with character Jane Eyre, or just
Jane Eyre? That disbelief, suspended willingly,
When eyes begin to move across the page,
Which comes to life, or when the movie starts,
Proves Brontë, better known as Currer Bell,
Designed a man and woman as a woman wants them
Both to be, the thorny path to that desired end.
Directors/readers flesh and fashion them according to the age.
Misogynist or patriarchal predator to some, he's also
Preyed upon, seduced, and trapped by chemistry—
Thoughtless mix of male ideal and blood
And female wile. And who is innocent, who
Guilty in events begun at Gateshead, Lowood,
Spanish Town, and on to Thornfield Park,
Dark crossing, fraught with mystery, madness,
Gothic spires, unrequited longing, bright
Redemptive fires. Rebirth at Moorhouse
Culminates at isolated Ferndean—
Paradise regained—where character
And reader come to sight,
Metaphor for self-renouncing love
That pulls us back for one more look or read.