

NIGHT.

Ann Radcliffe

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Now Ev'ning fades! her pensive step retires,
And Night leads on the dews, and shadowy hours:
Her awful pomp of planetary fires,
And all her train of visionary powers.

These paint with fleeting shapes the dream of sleep,
These swell the waking soul with pleasing dread;
These through the glooms in forms terrific sweep,
And rouse the thrilling horrors of the dead!

Queen of the solemn thought—mysterious Night!
Whose step is darkness, and whose voice is fear!
Thy shades I welcome with severe delight,
And hail thy hollow gales, that sigh so drear!

When, wrapt in clouds, and riding in the blast,
Thou roll'st the storm along the sounding shore,
I love to watch the whelming billows, cast
On rocks below, and listen to the roar.

Thy milder terrors, Night, I frequent woo,
Thy silent lightnings, and thy meteor's glare,
Thy northern fires, bright with ensanguine hue,
That light in heaven's high vault the fervid air.

But chief I love thee, when thy lucid car
Sheds through the fleecy clouds a trembling gleam,
And shews the misty mountain from afar,
The nearer forest, and the valley's stream:

And nameless objects in the vale below,
That floating dimly to the musing eye,
Assume, at Fancy's touch, fantastic shew,
And raise her sweet romantic visions high.

Then let me stand amidst thy glooms profound
On some wild woody steep, and hear the breeze
That swells in mournful melody around,
And faintly dies upon the distant trees.

What melancholy charm steals o'er the mind!
What hallow'd tears the rising rapture greet!

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While many a viewless spirit in the wind
Sighs to the lonely hour in accents sweet!

Ah! who the dear illusions pleas'd would yield,
Which Fancy wakes from silence and from shades,
For all the sober forms of Truth reveal'd,
For all the scenes that Day's bright eye pervades!"