

*Reader, I*

*have not so much time for thinking.* September, 1854. Brontë three months in. Time gone to the needlework, stray visits. Time to the dust pan and the broth. The cough. The pleasant walks. Happy, she still kept stock. That trick about preventing blisters—I fill a plastic bag with water, place it inside my shoe. In the freezer, the leather expands, new form. Thinking—if you'd call it that. My nights more hunting down the danger lines, the wiry what-ifs. *Calm your mind*, he coaxes. As if. Still, there's less room for it—the high beam, the proficient angst. Perhaps a weighted blanket. Something soothing, crochet. All the doctors, all the pills, a journal by the bed. *Are you thinking about what you read?* Thinking. No. Prism in which one Me forgets to say please. One waking with scuffed knees, too many gimlets. Me sitting silent in the room where Father died. Me always sorry plus never quite. Me an unphotogenic bride. Me wiving, me future-wide. Me vs. children, my pride. A mirror flashes back your blind spots. A man reveals worse: your possible selves. The you you might have been. See it fill his eyes.