

*Without the Veil Between*, Pre-publication Review by Thomas Davis,  
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Diane Denton's new novel, *Without the Veil Between*, should be read in a place where time, inside and outside the reader, is suspended, where today and tomorrow are not absolutes, but songs faintly heard as the sun descends into the horizon of a shining sea. The story of the Bronte family told through the senses of Anne Bronte, the sister who did not become the powerful force in English literature her sisters, Charlotte and Emily, did, explores how genius interplays with the everyday frustrations, sensations, and tragedies of life, transmuting the imagination and observations of three brilliant sisters into the tapestry of stories and poetry that is still relevant to our contemporary lives.

What the story of the Bronte's has always had at its core is a question, how did literary genius flower in three of the women of a Victorian family from the English village of Haworth and the landscape of the English Moors when the mother died so young and the father was a clergyman in a small village? After all, in the years she served as a governess the idealistic Anne had a status that was only a little better than the servants in the stratified society of the England of that time.

Denton's novel provides at least a hint of how the three sisters turned the societal and domestic constraints in which they lived into characters and stories and poetry that have stood the test of time. Anne was, at least to the modern sensibility, a great novelist in spite of her contemporary reputation, and as she weaves her gentle spirit into dealing with the dissolution of her brother, her father's loving distraction, and her two sisters' determination to overcome the limitations of their sex in Victorian society, the reader gets a sense of how genius rose out of the tensions, love, and straining within the family itself.

This was not a flowering from wealth and status, but sparks engendered out of living in a certain time and place where meals were prepared and eaten, long walks in foreboding weather were gloried in, and conversation helped spur what would seem to have been at the time literary efforts without much chance of bearing fruit.

What Denton has achieved is a portrait placed in a time very different from the jangling present, but that resonates in a way that suspends years and centuries and lets us feel the joys and sadness of a writer whose unflinching look at life, especially in her novels, rings with the authenticity of who, inside, she really was.