Women’s Bodies and Books: Portraits of Victorian Women Poets

Linda K. Hughes
Addie Levy Professor of Literature
Texas Christian University

2017 Mark Samuels Lasner Collection Exhibition and Symposium
University of Delaware
March 18, 2017
Nell Gwynn (1650-1687), National Portrait Gallery, painted 1680
on all questions affecting proprieties, decorums, what we may call the *ethics* of sentimentalism ..., their verdict may be considered oracular, and without appeal. But we dare not say that we consider them entitled to speak with equal authority on those higher and deeper questions where not instinct nor heart, but severe and tried intellect is required to return the responses....A *maker* [Hemans] is not.
Felicia Hemans (1793-1835),
1875 edition of *Poems*
Felicia Hemans,

*Songs of the Affections*, 1828

**SONGS OF THE AFFECTIONS,**

*WITH*

**OTHER POEMS.*

**BY FELICIA HEMANS.***

They tell last dreams—a lonely spirit's dreams—
Yet ever through their floating imagery
Wanders a vein of melancholy love.
An aimless thought of home—as in the song
Of the aged flaxen ye may deem there dwells
A permanent memory of blue skies and flowers.
And living streams—for e'er!

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH; AND
T. CADELL, STRAND, LONDON.
MDCCCXXX.
Mathilde Blind photograph, 1870
Mathilde Blind (1841-1896), Selected Poems, ed. Arthur Symons, 1897
POEMS.

BY

ELIZABETH BARRETT BARRETT,

AUTHOR OF "THE RENAISSANCE," ETC.

"De patria, et de Deo, des poètes, de l'âme
Qui d'élire un prince?"—VIRGIL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.

1844.
Dedication.

TO MY FATHER.

When your eyes fall upon this page of dedication, and you start to see to whom it is inscribed, your first thought will be of the time far off when I was a child and wrote verses, and when I dedicated them to you who were my public and my critic. Of all that such a recollection implies of saddest and sweetest to both of us, it would become neither of us to speak before the world; nor would it be possible for us to speak of it to one another, with voices that did not falter. Enough, that what is in my heart when I write thus, will be fully known to yours.

And my desire is that you, who are a witness how if this art of poetry had been a less earnest object to me, it must have fallen from exhausted hands before this day—that you, who have shared with me in things bitter and sweet, softening or enhancing them, every day—that you, who hold with me over all sense of loss and transience, one hope by one Name,—may accept from
POEMS.

BY
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

NEW EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

LONDON:
CHAPMAN & HALL, 193, PICCADILLY.
(LATE MR. TAYLOR)
1850.
Field Talfourd, Portrait of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Chalk, 1859
Elizabeth Barrett Browning and her son Pen, 1860
Elizabeth Barrett Browning
daguerrotype, 1858, MSL Collection
Elizabeth Barrett Browning
daguerrotype, **1858**, MSL Collection

Title Page and Frontispiece,
*Aurora Leigh*, 4th ed., **1859**
Title Page and Frontispiece, Aurora Leigh, 4th ed., 1859
Christina Rossetti (1818-1894)

Goblin Market, 1862; art by D G Rossetti
Christina Rossetti, *New Poems* (1896), with frontispiece by D. G. Rossetti
WHEN I am dead, my dearest,  
Sing no sad songs for me;  
Plant thou no roses at my head,  
Nor shady cypress-tree:  
Be the green grass above me  
With showers and dewdrops wet;  
And if thou wilt, remember,  
And if thou wilt, forget.
D. G. Rossetti portrait of Christina Rossetti, pencil and chalk, 1866
Christina Rossetti’s frontispiece and title page, Roberts Brothers (US, 1888)
Double Frontispiece, Roberts Brothers

Goblin Market, 1866
THE AUTHOR TO HER AMERICAN READERS.

My little book seems scarcely to admit of prefatory words: either it will speak for itself, or all my additions must fail to speak for it.

Its reappearance, however, in an American edition, gives me a welcome opportunity of acknowledging the courtesy and liberality of Messrs. Roberts Brothers, who have arranged with me and with my kind friend and publisher, Mr. Macmillan, to bring it before the American public.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

London, May, 1866.
THE AUTHOR TO HER AMERICAN READERS.

My little book seems scarcely to admit of preface words: either it will speak for itself, or all my additions must fail to speak for it.

Its reappearance, however, in an American edition, gives me a welcome opportunity of acknowledging the courtesy and liberality of Messrs. Roberts Brothers, who have arranged with me and with my kind friend and publisher, Mr. Macmillan, to bring it before the American public.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

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Christina Rossetti’s frontispiece and title page, Roberts Brothers (US, 1888)
Portrait Credit, Roberts Brothers, 1888

FROM AN ORIGINAL DRAWING BY DANTE G. ROSSETTI, IN THE POSSESSION OF THE PUBLISHERS.
Christina Rossetti’s frontispiece and title page, Roberts Brothers (US, 1888)
A. Mary F. Robinson (1857-1944), A Handful of Honeysuckle, 1878
A. Mary F. Robinson, Photograph

c. 1880
A. Mary F. Robinson, frontispiece and title page, *Songs, Ballads etc.* (1888)
A. Mary F. Robinson (Mme James Darmesteter), *Lyrics* (1891)
A. Mary F. Robinson portrait by Lisa Stillman preceding title page, 1902
Robinson (Mme Duclaux), facsimile signatures and title page, 1902
A. Mary F. Robinson portrait by Lisa Stillman preceding title page, 1902
Graham R. Tomson (1860-1911), *The Bird-Bride* (1889), title page
A SUMMER NIGHT
AND OTHER POEMS

BY
GRAHAM R. TOMSON

WITH A FRONTISPICE BY A. TOMSON

Methuen and Co.
18 BURY STREET, W.C.
1891
Graham R. Tomson frontispiece, 1891; painting by Arthur Tomson
“A Summer Night,” 1891, stanza one

The linden leaves are wet,
The gas-lights flare—
Deep yellow jewels set
In dusky air,
In dim air subtly sweet
With vanished rain.
Graham R. Tomson frontispiece, 1891; painting by Arthur Tomson
Poems of Rosamund Marriott Watson, 1912, frontispiece and title page
William Rothenstein, Alice Meynell (1897), Mark Samuels Lasner Collection
She holds her little thoughts in sight,
   Though gay they run and leap.
She is so circumspect and right;
   She has her soul to keep.
She walks—the lady of my delight—
   A shepherdess of sheep.
Alice Meynell, *Later Poems*, 1902
Alice Meynell, *The Shepherdess and Other Verses* (1913); portrait by Adrian Stokes
Publishing note, *The Shepherdess and Other Poems*

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**THE SHEPHERDESS**

She walks—the lady of my delight—
A shepherdess of sheep.
Her flocks are thoughts. She keeps them white;
She guards them from the steep;
She feeds them on the fragrant height,
And folds them in for sleep.

She roams maternal hills and bright,
Dark valleys safe and deep.
Into that tender breast at night
The chastest stars may peep.
She walks—the lady of my delight—
A shepherdess of sheep.
Alice Meynell, *Collected Poems*, 1913, with portrait by John Singer Sargent
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E. Nesbit (1858-1924), *Lays and Legends*, 1886, title page
E. Nesbit, Lays and Legends, 1892, title page and frontispiece portrait
E. Nesbit, concluding stanza, “The Woman’s World,” 1892

I am only you!
I am yours—part of you—your wife!
And I have no other life.

I cannot think, cannot do,
I cannot breathe, cannot see;
There is “us,” but there is not “me”—
And worst, at your kiss, I grow
Contented so.
D. G. Rossetti, Roberts Brothers *Poems* 1870, title page
D. G. Rossetti frontispiece and title page, Roberts Brothers, 1882