



Christina Rossetti: The Patience of Style (Victorian Literature and Culture Series)

Constance W. Hassett

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Although the cultural and literary influence of Christina Rossetti has recently been widely acknowledged, the belatedness of this critical attention has left wide gaps in our understanding of her poetic contribution. Often focusing solely on her early work and neglecting her later volumes, many critics minimized her relevance by measuring her stature through either her early poems or her relationships with well-known Victorian literary figures. In *Christina Rossetti: The Patience of Style*, Constance W. Hassett argues against this diminishment by reopening Rossetti's canon, challenging both critics and readers to trade their silent appreciation of her most familiar verse for a patient and active scrutiny of her body of work, which contains some of the finest lyric poetry of the nineteenth century.

Keeping her primary focus on the poems themselves, Hassett traces Rossetti's career through her five poetry collections, *Goblin Market and Other Poems* (1862), *The Prince's Progress and Other Poems* (1866), *Sing-Song: A Nursery Rhyme Book* (1872), *A Pageant and Other Poems* (1881), and *Verses* (1893). In a comprehensive account of Rossetti's evolving style and genre, Hassett analyzes the strengths and failures of the poetry, its attention to the resources of rhythm and the shifts of diction, its momentum and reserve, and the rationale for its revision. The book also explores Rossetti's innovative poetry for children, her daring reconfiguration of religion and poetry in a late-life commentary on the Apocalypse, and the influences both of female precursors she admired and outgrew and of the male circle of Pre-Raphaelite poets.

For art historians of the Pre-Raphaelites, scholars of women's writing and gender studies, students of children's literature, and researchers in religious studies, not to mention readers in Victorian poetry, *Christina Rossetti: The Patience of Style* will serve as an indispensable and eye-opening guide.

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