Eve and the creation cycle: Christina Rossetti's reaction to John Milton's "Paradise Lost"

Melanie Ann Hanson
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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EVE AND THE CREATION CYCLE -- CHRISTINA ROSSETTI'S REACTION TO JOHN MILTON'S PARADISE LOST

by

Melanie Ann Hanson

Bachelor of Arts
San Diego State University
1975

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
English

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University of Nevada, Las Vegas
May 1998

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Dean of the Graduate College
ABSTRACT

Eve and the Creation Cycle -- Christina Rossetti's Reaction to Milton's *Paradise Lost*

by

Melanie Ann Hanson

Dr. James Hazen, Examination Committee Chair
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Christina Rossetti's poetry is concerned with the image of woman as a creator and as a redeemer, the woman who has fallen from innocence and whose innocence is restored through participation in the creation/redemption cycle. Rossetti's writing reflects her personal experiences, her love of Dante's works, her interest in the Anglican sisterhood, her own Tractarian obsession, the influence of her association with the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, and most specifically, her reaction to Milton's depiction of Eve in *Paradise Lost*. She reconstructs Milton's Eve in her own poetry. This treatise will examine a selection of poetry by Christina Rossetti, in specific her depiction of Eve, as a reaction to Milton's Eve in his epic poem.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Christina Rossetti's poem "Eve," written on January 30, 1865, reflects decades of work during which Rossetti pondered Eve's influence on female identity. In this poem, Christina Rossetti reflects upon the shadow that the original sin of Eve placed on the women of the world. In the first four stanzas, Rossetti reveals a very different version of Eve's character than appears in John Milton's epic poem Paradise Lost.

'While I sit at the door,
Sick to gaze within,
Mine eye weepeth sore
For sorrow and sin:
As a tree my sin stands
To darken all lands;
Death is the fruit it bore.

'How have Eden bowers grown
Without Adam to bend them?
How have Eden flowers blown,
Squandering their sweet breath,
Without me to tend them?
The Tree of Life was ours,
Tree twelvefold-fruitless,
Most lofty tree that flowers,
Most deeply rooted:
I chose the Tree of Death.

'Hadst thou but said me nay,
   Adam my brother,
I might have pined away--
   I, but none other:
God might have let thee stay
Safe in our garden,
By putting me away
Beyond all pardon.

'I, Eve, sad mother
Of all who must live,
I, not another,
Plucked bitterest fruit to give
My friend, husband, lover.
O wanton eyes, run over!
Who but I should grieve?
Cain hath slain his brother:
Of all who must die mother,
Miserable Eve!'
The concept of a man as friend/husband/lover (which is the way Rossetti views her relationship with God), the image of the "eye" representing female nothingness brought about by succumbing to the vanity of the material world, the expression of cyclic imagery, the hope of redemption reflected in nature's munificence, the use of personal and simple authorial tone (versus John Milton's sense of sublime epic): all of these are distinctly Christina Rossetti's depiction of Eve.

Christina Rossetti's concept of Eve's character reflects many influences from her life. Her relationship with the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood can be seen in her poem "Eve." The representation of nature as a mirror of heaven's bounty, the delineation of the source of creativity, the use of biblical imagery to reveal the moral truths of Ruskinian Vital Beauty, and the utilization of melancholy tone are all evident in "Eve." Near the time Christina Rossetti wrote Monna Innominata in the 1870's, she had prepared two pages of notes for her own devotional prose version of Genesis. Rossetti expostulates in these notes on the theory that Eve's punishment was not the penalty of death but the penance of bringing life into the world. In many of her poems like "Eve," she praises those who can withstand life as Christ and Eve endured it. Christ-like and feminine suffering are related in many of her writings.

Human suffering originated with the fall. Rossetti's poetry contains what Janet Adelman describes as a
"psychologized version of the Fall, in which original sin is literally the sin of origin, inherited from the maternal body that brings death into the world." The original sin as the sin of origin is evident in the poem "Eve": "O wanton eyes, run over;/Who but I should grieve?--/Cain hath slain his brother:/Of all who must die mother,/Miserable Eve!" (ll. 31-5). Rossetti's Tractarian beliefs ameliorate this "death" in her poetry with life everlasting in the presence of Christ, the Savior. Rossetti's solution is to create poetry, much of which illuminates the story of Eve, who is the creator of mankind, creator of life and death for mankind, creator of the fall, and the ultimate creator of the redeemer of mankind. Writing poetry especially about Eve and her place in the process of the world is part of a woman's creative influence.

Rossetti's description of nature in the poem "Eve" reflects her Pre-Raphaelite influence. It reflects the Pre-Raphaelites' view that Nature's beauty is comforting. Nature comforted Rossetti because she would see it as part of the promise of the creation/redemption cycle that women were an integral part of. On the other hand, the mutability and therefore vanity of this world, a Tractarian tenet, is also revealed in the poem. "Eve" is a poem about sin, grief, and renewal.

In Christina Rossetti's poetry, sin and renewal spring from motherhood. "In Rossetti's work, Eve is a significant maternal figure, more so than Blessed Mary." She is a mother
who grieves for her sins in Rossetti's poem "Eve" where she grieves over the body of her son Abel. She identifies with Cain since it is her disobedience to God's laws, a sin in Tractarian philosophy, that brought death into the world. "Her anguish is underscored by the responsibility she bears and accepts; she knows it is she who let sin and death into the world." Eve is always portrayed by Rossetti as a woman with innocent intentions not as the evil seductress Eve appears to be in Western culture and art and in Paradise Lost. The poem "Eve" ends with the serpent grinning evilly: "Only the serpent in the dust,/Wriggling and crawling,/Grinned an evil grin and thrust/His tongue out with its fork" (ll. 67-70). It is the serpent/Satan, not Eve, who was the source of evil and the source of the fall.

Rossetti's depiction of Eve was not only a reflection of her life experiences but also a deconstruction of the portrait of Eve in Paradise Lost. There was a wide variety of reactions to John Milton and his poetry during the Victorian period, and this reveals Milton's great influence on the age. For the most part, John Milton's works were revered by the Victorians. However, the Tories, High Churchmen, Catholics, Tractarians, and Pre-Raphaelites, with whom Christina Rossetti aligned her philosophy, reacted to Milton's Paradise Lost with disapproval. John Keble and John Henry Newman of the Oxford Movement found some of Milton's works disappointing even though they admired his sonnet technique, and Christina
Rossetti echoed this impression. This element of the religious community felt that Milton had placed too much emphasis in *Paradise Lost* on the heroism and nobility of characters like Satan and the fallen angels, who should have been portrayed as foul and wicked. In William Michael Rossetti's memoir of his older sister, Christina Rossetti, he reveals that his sister loved Dante, Plato, Shelley, Coleridge, Tennyson, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, but she "disliked...Milton's *Paradise Lost.*"

In view of Milton's vast influence on the Victorians, it is not surprising that Christina Rossetti had her own opinion of Milton's works. In an unpublished letter to Sir Wyndham Dunstan, F.R.S., written in May 1894, Christina Rossetti asserted, "Milton I cannot warm towards, even let alone all theological questions." Rossetti died in December of this same year; even at the very end of her life, she still found Milton's works wanting. Milton's *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* attempted to answer the question of human destiny and the human condition as Christian Rossetti's religious poetry did, but Christina Rossetti felt that Milton had missed the mark by creating an account of the fall of man that did not emphasize enough the most important aspect--woman's paramount place in the action. This attitude reflects Christina Rossetti's Tractarian influence. Milton's work emphasizes the fall of Satan and Adam with not enough emphasis on the role of woman (Eve, Mary) in the heavenly universe.
This thesis explores those aspects of Christina Rossetti's life and works which define her displeasure with John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, specifically his depiction of Eve. Christina Rossetti's works speak to the idea that Milton does not do enough to liberate Eve in his epic poem. Rossetti agreed with some Victorian critics who saw Milton's authorship of Eve in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* as an assumption "that his theological position was the ultimate one." According to Tractarian philosophy, Milton's version and even the Bible's story from Genesis "was not adequate to explain rationally or justify sufficiently the ways of God to man[kind]." Also, Joseph Wittreich asserted that Milton set himself up as the definer of the questions "What is a poet?" and "What is poetry?" "Eve's relation to Adam as mirror and shadow is the paradigmatic relations which canonical authority institutes between itself and its believers, converting them...to a 'higher authority.'"

Christina Rossetti reacted to this by creating her own sense of the world of poet and poetry. This female poet's sense of self as daughter, as potential wife and mother, and as woman was linked to her self-definition as "literary creature/creator." In this way, Christina Rossetti carried on a tradition of "all women writers [who] have been to some extent Milton's daughters, continually wondering what their relationship to patriarchal poetry ought to be..." From Rossetti's perspective, however, women are all daughters of
Eve. Central to this idea is the concept of the creation/redemption cycle. It is a cycle because God created Eve who is the mother of mankind, the Virgin Mary brought Christ into the world, and Christ is part of the Godhead who created Eve. In other words, God creates Eve but, as the mother of mankind, Eve ultimately creates God, made man in Christ. All women contribute to this cycle of creation and redemption by being a creator in some form, either as an artist or as a procreator.

Christina Rossetti emphasizes her relationship as a daughter of Eve, who figuratively eats from the tree of Good and Evil to gain knowledge, as a means of not submitting to past literary canon. This is a revision of Milton's works, not a subversive act towards God, whom Christina Rossetti revered and to whom Rossetti dedicated much of her poetry. Therefore, Christina Rossetti's muse is God, the parallel to Milton's use of the mythic muse Urania in *Paradise Lost*. Christina Rossetti rewrites/recreates *Paradise Lost* in her own works "so as to make it a more accurate mirror of female experience." In the work "Goblin Market" in particular, she reacts to Milton's epic work by creating her own myth as an "encoded artwork, concealing female secrets within male-devised genres and conventions." Her later poetry and prose on the subject of Eve expand on what she originally contemplates about Eve in her early poetry and in "Goblin Market."
Milton's Influence

Rossetti's Eve, a personae she developed over decades of writing, is a reworking of Milton's version of Eve. To most Victorians, however, Milton was a saint and his "poems were memorized and treasured." Particular to give homage to Milton were the Whigs, Evangelicals, and dissenters in Victorian society. Poets in the 19th century like Hazlitt, Keats, Shelley, Wordsworth, and Blake praised Milton's technical poetic prowess; critics of this time also admired his progressive democratic attitudes on political, moral, and social issues.

T.B. Macaulay is a representative of the early Victorian critical voice concerning Milton's place in literary posterity. Macaulay asserts that John Milton's works can be "classed among the noblest productions of the human mind." In 1888, Matthew Arnold praised "the power of Milton's art." "Milton has made the great style no longer an exotic here; he has made it an inmate amongst us [the English-speaking populace], a leaven, and a power." Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in 1838 that Milton's forte was his ability to inspire his readership. "Are not all men fortified by the remembrance of the bravery, the purity, the temperance, the toil, the independence and the angelic devotion of this man, who, in a revolutionary age, taking counsel only of himself, endeavored, in his writings and in his life, to carry out the life of a man to new heights of spiritual grace and dignity, without any
abatement of its strength?" Samuel Taylor Coleridge in 1818 commended Milton's recognition of Adam and Eve's "mutual rationality" and spiritual equality in *Paradise Lost.*

Mary Wollstonecraft, writing in the 1790's, would have agreed with Coleridge's viewpoint on Milton. In her time, Milton was viewed by women like Charlotte Smith, Catherine Talbot, and Anna Barbauld as an anarchist inciting women to rebel against their suppressed state. Wollstonecraft also saw that Milton's Eve was "one of the masculine stereotypes of female nature" and revealed more about the male imagination in Renaissance England and their view of woman as the Puritan housewife than about the Bible. Wollstonecraft believed Milton was attempting in *Paradise Lost* to condemn such behavior by men. "For Milton, a woman was not a mere satellite." Wollstonecraft commended Milton's attempts in his epic poem to try to free women of the "bondage of species," to attempt to show women as the social and cultural equals of men, but she also felt that Milton's attempts were not nearly persuasive enough to counteract years of patriarchal oppression.

**Depiction of Eve in *Paradise Lost***

Milton's Eve is a complex portrait based on the sources of *Genesis,* Anderini's *L'Adama,* Peyton's *Glass of Tome,* and Beaumont's *Psyche.* Eve is inferior in the hierarchal structure, but the harmony in Eden, the mutual respect,
loyalty and obligation, is emphasized just as much as the hierarchy. An example of this is in Book IV where Milton describes "our two first Parents" as "Two of far nobler shape erect and tall,/Godlike erect, with native Honour clad/In naked Majestie seemd Lords of all,/ And worthie seemd,/for in thir looks Divine/The image of thir glorious Maker shon," (ll. 288-92). This description of Adam and Eve is equal; it indicates no superiority in delineating Adam.

Milton's syntax is not derogatory toward Eve but embodies the mutual need between the sexes. Eve is defined in Book VIII not in subordinate terms but as "societie" and "companie" for Adam (ll. 444-51). Barbara K. Lewalski asserts that the interdependence and powerful bonding of Adam and Eve reveals Milton's complex treatment of women in his poem. Eve participates in Milton's Eden in the full range of human activities; Milton paints her with qualities that are exceptional for his time. Adam and Eve are both held individually responsible for their actions. However, Lewalski agrees with other feminists who believe that Milton does not go far enough with his depiction of gender reciprocity.

Pre-Raphaelite and Tractarian Reactions to Milton

Milton's name was not revered by the supporters of the Pre-Raphaelite Movement including Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Christina Rossetti, whose interest in medievalism and the joy of art as it reveals the sacramental aesthetic ran contrary to
their view of Milton as the stern, ascetic Puritan. The followers of the Pre-Raphaelite Movement were disapproving of classical and mythological allusion when mixed with orthodox Christian iconography. Eve is compared to the classical image of Sin, Satan's daughter, in Paradise Lost. Sin is depicted as female and serpentine like Satan. Sin is described as the essence of monstrous maternity, paralleled with Eve's fall as the catalyst for her "slave[ry] to the species." Sin is vulnerable to the charms of Satan, opening the gates of Hell in disobedience to God's edict, just as Eve disobeys God's commandment and succumbs to Satan's trickery. Christina Rossetti found this connection between Sin and Eve in Milton's work to be a misinterpretation of the female role in God's plan.

Paradise Lost was primarily admired by the Victorians for its "sublimity": this aspect of Milton's epic work the Tractarians looked on with disapproval. Some of the Victorian artists and poets were inspired by Milton to "cram their works with enormous objects and panoramas, limitless space, vast irregular landscapes, titanic beings, and cataclysmic occurrences." In contrast, the works of Christina Rossetti, Charlotte Brontë, and Gerard Manley Hopkins from the 1800's use religious themes which deal with the private, personal, and singular experience and with the religious communal network much like Dante's Divine Comedy. John Ruskin and John Henry Newman felt that simple plainness
and purity was best suited to Bible stories like the teachings of Christ. They also felt Milton's emphasis on the nobility of Satan and the fallen angels to be inappropriate. As a true Tractarian, Christina Rossetti would have seen this focus on the rebellious fallen angels and on Adam as skewed and sacrilegious; the Church of England abhorred idol worship. Christ as the Almighty, the descendant of Eve, was the only appropriate subject of worship and therefore should have been the central focus in Paradise Lost.

Reserve is another important aspect to Tractarian aesthetics. Part of this reserve required that the disciples of God await the unfolding of God's plan with patience; to try to comprehend the entirety of God or to believe this is possible is the folly of pride. This would be another objection the Tractarians would have to Milton's Paradise Lost. Milton attempts to explain God's motives and plan. Another aspect of Milton's Puritan tendencies is the Puritan view of imagination. The Puritans saw imagination as the culprit to man's temptation and fall which is outlined in Milton's portrayal of Eve in Paradise Lost.

Female Reactions to Milton

Milton's position of honor in the literary canon had a great impact on future generations of writers, particularly female ones. Although there are contemporary feminists like Joan Mallory Webber who believe that Milton was a "modernist"
whose poem was preparing the way for feminist thinking because
his poem was an appeal to the victimized, there are just as
many feminist thinkers from the 19th and 20th centuries who
disagree with this interpretation of Milton.\textsuperscript{42} The "politics
of reading the patriarchal canon" holds up "the ideals of
'thinking like a man.'"\textsuperscript{43} This pressures female writers,
according to Elaine Showalter and Judith Fetterley, to
identify with the male viewpoint or position of power against
the female perspective.

Milton's depiction of the relationship between Adam and
Eve reveals another important aspect in Christina Rossetti's
philosophy. Adam is actually viewed by some critics as more
culpable than Eve for the fall of mankind since Adam's
connection to "right reason" was supposed to help him lead Eve
to the path of righteousness (\textit{Paradise Lost}, Book XII, l. 84).
Therefore, Adam is seen as the greater transgressor.\textsuperscript{44} One
place in Milton's poem where this is revealed is in Book VI,
lines 908-9. Adam is instructed in this manner: "But list'n
not to his Temptations, warn/Thy weaker." Some feminists
would have a problem with this interpretation, but Christina
Rossetti who, as a true Victorian woman, recognized a woman's
inferior position to her father, brother, or husband in
society, would have concurred. Christina Rossetti's
difficulty sprang from the custom in Victorian society
concerning marriage directly related to Milton's line in Book
IV, lines 299-301 of \textit{Paradise Lost}, "Hee for God only, shee
for God in him:/ His fair large Front and Eye sublime declar'd/Absolute rule." In fact, Christina Rossetti writes about this specific passage of *Paradise Lost* in sonnet 5 of *Monna Innominita.*

Another passage which pertains to this subject is in Book IV of *Paradise Lost*, lines 635-638, where Eve addresses Adam stating, "My Author and Disposer, what thou bidst/Unargu'd I obey; so God ordains,/God is thy Law, thou mine: to know no more/Is womans happiest knowledge and her praise." Christina Rossetti found this idea of knowledge and experience of God through another agent a stifling concept. She turned down several suitors for her hand in marriage due to religious differences. It is probable that these religious differences came from her obsession with wanting to know God first hand, either through the creation of her poetry, or through acceptance of God as her husband in the vows taken as a nun. Rossetti felt her temperament was not suited to entering the convent as her sister Maria had done, but she obviously contemplated this road to closeness with God as explained in her poem "The Convent Threshold." Also, the Tractarians believed that celibacy was a legitimate alternative to marriage; living the ascetic life was promoted by believers in the Oxford Movement.

Christina Rossetti's works, especially "Goblin Market," are viewed by many feminist critics as "revisionary critiques" of the patriarchal tenets of literary voice and of the
characterizations of Eve, Satan, and Adam as depicted in *Paradise Lost*. Christina Rossetti shared this perspective with her female predecessors and contemporaries Mary Shelley, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and Charlotte and Emily Brontë. Christina Rossetti and other female writers of the 19th century believed in a female consciousness that was a reworking of the "cosmology" of Milton's epic poem. This idea speaks to the core of this thesis: Christina Rossetti saw the role of motherhood/the role of creator as a most significant partnership or parallel connection between woman and God that men had no claim to. As an orthodox Tractarian, Rossetti believed Eve's sin was part of a pre-ordained plan where woman ultimately participated in the redemption of mankind. A fallen woman, the mother of mankind, was the ancestor of a pure woman who brought God-made-man into the world to redeem the world's sins. The sense of female powerlessness in a patriarchal universe is undercut in Christina Rossetti's works by her devotion to God's creation cycle that only women could participate in.
NOTES FROM CHAPTER 1  
PAGES 1-10

7. D'Amico 177.
8. Ibid.
11. Ibid. 89.
12. Rossetti lxx.
15. Ibid. 133.
19. Gilbert and Gubar 220.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
23. Ibid. 11.
27. Ibid. 367.
28. Ibid. 96.
NOTES FROM CHAPTER 1
PAGES 10-16

31. Ibid.
37. Gilbert and Gubar 198.
39. Nelson 44.
40. Ibid. 89.
46. Shawcross 333.
47. Gilbert and Gubar 189.
CHAPTER 2

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI'S LIFE EXPERIENCES

Much of Christina Rossetti's life and beliefs are reflected in her literary works about Eve. A significant example is her attitude about marriage and celibacy. Her concerns about marriage directly related to her relationship with Christ. Her relationship with her father, brothers, and suitors impacted her decisions in this regard. In Rossetti's poem "A Better Resurrection," the speaker experiences Christ on earth from different levels. The soul is purged of the material world in this process and the end result is total absorption by Christ in the afterlife. In a reversal of the plot of "Goblin Market" where Laura is reborn by "consuming" the anointed body of Lizzie as a symbol of Christ, Christ "consumes" the soul of the penitent. Christina Rossetti saw God as all consuming, the embodiment of "lover and daddy."¹ "Father and Lover" is indeed the title of a poem Christina Rossetti wrote in 1858.² This concept of Christ as lover and father interconnects with Rossetti's characterization of Eve as part of the redemptive cycle of God's universe. The God Rossetti defines in her poetry is a God of love, a comforting

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father, and a taskmaster. To understand this, one must understand Christina Rossetti's relationship with her own father, brothers, and suitors.

Christina Rossetti's Homelife

Christina Rossetti's life was devoted to her parents. She never married; she became a spinster who was caretaker and companion to her ailing parents, particularly her father whom she nursed for many years. Rossetti was very close to her mother throughout their lives. Christina Rossetti's mother, Frances, attracted to the rituals and choral music of the Oxford Movement, began to attend Christ Church on Albany Street in 1843, accompanied by Christina and Maria, Christina's older sister. Christina Rossetti attended Christ Church for twenty years and during this time published Maude, Goblin Market and Other Poems, and The Prince's Progress and Other Poems. This is significant since Gabriele Rossetti, Christina Rossetti's father, was a devout Catholic. However, Gabriele Rossetti allowed the religious training of his children to be conducted by his wife.

Since her father was at times an evasive presence in her life except as an invalid needing Christina Rossetti's care, Rossetti turned to her Eternal Father for guidance. It is therefore not surprising that Christ as father, lover, and savior and Eve as the ultimate mother figure would figure prominently in her poetry. Therefore, Christine Rossetti's
view of male/female relationships became disengaged from her understanding of her father, brothers, and suitors as caretakers or of herself as their caretaker and instead became focused on the connection between God and woman, especially God's relationship to the first woman, Eve.

Christina Rossetti did become engaged in 1848 to James Collinson, a lesser member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and a member of the Catholic Church. He decided to become an Anglican because of his involvement with Christina Rossetti. Christina did not love him and when he renounced the Anglican Church and decided to rejoin the Catholic Church in Rome in 1850, their engagement was broken. A second proposal of marriage came in 1866 from Charles Bagot Cayley, a former student of Christina Rossetti's father. She denied his proposal because of his agnosticism. Similarly, in Rossetti's poem "The Iniquity of the Fathers Upon the Children" (1865), an illegitimate child "decides never to marry so that no man will have the power to assign her an identity." Also, Laura loses her ability to define herself in "Goblin Market" when she gives in to the temptation of the goblin men and sells her soul for the "forbidden fruit."

The innocent woman in Rossetti's poetry represents the ideal Victorian woman, meek and submissive, especially to the men in the woman's life. Rossetti speaks metaphorically of the fallen woman in many of her poems including "Goblin Market," "What Would I Give," "Life and Death," "Cousin Kate,"
and "The Convent Threshold." Rossetti felt that marriage brought her farther away from her relationship with God. Marriage represented "fallen" status, falling away from the path to Grace through participating in Christ's sufferings, and instead, giving in to the temptations of the flesh and of worldly vanities. Jerome McGann discusses the illusion of worldly love and marriage in Rossetti's works which encourage women to become dependent on men instead of on God. Rossetti saw this as Eve's ultimate sin.

This dependency on men is associated to deceptions, fears, and exploitation. This fallacy was part of the corruption of the material world that women should be suspicious of and which is exemplified in many of Rossetti's poems including "Goblin Market." Rossetti's poetry reflects her belief that it was the goal of every woman to "address the personal state of her soul" as Eve did. The Victorian woman could not relate as a Christian to others without first looking to her own sins and finding the love of Christ in her own life. The soul's absolution for every woman is the final concern in most of her poetry. By embracing the "creator" inside herself, either through the imagination and or through motherhood, a woman finds this peace.

Although Christina Rossetti did not personally embrace motherhood as a life choice, she saw the significance of motherhood for the female descendants of Eve. Motherhood, as depicted in the character of Sin in Milton's Paradise Lost is
poisonous. Motherhood is not toxic\textsuperscript{16} but nurturing in Christina Rossetti's poetry delineating Eve. This is evident at the end of "Goblin Market." Christina Rossetti admired the literary contributions of Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Rossetti's view of motherhood in relation to the fallen woman is similar to Elizabeth Barrett Browning's depiction of the fallen woman and illegitimate mother Marian Erle in the verse-novel \emph{Aurora Leigh}. Marian Erle "is drugged, raped, and impregnated, but nevertheless remains essentially pure and a loving mother of her illegitimate child."\textsuperscript{17} Aurora Leigh, the central character, is on a quest in the book to find her place as a "creator" (woman and artist).

Aurora Leigh's meetings with Marian Erle's character as a fallen woman assist Aurora Leigh with this quest to retain purity in the face of corruption. Christina Rossetti's works revolve around this same idea of purifying sin and resisting temptation. The fallen woman figures prominently in Rossetti's works also; the figure of Mary Magdalene, another fallen woman like Eve, appears in \emph{The Face of the Deep}, "Mary Magdalene," "Mary Magdalene and the Other Mary," and \emph{Time Flies}. In fact, "Magdalene" was a synonym for a reformed prostitute in Victorian England.\textsuperscript{18} Christina Rossetti's works replicate the themes of innocence struggling to remain pure and the fallen redeemed through Christ's love.
Dante Alighieri's Influence

The theme of purity was evident in another significant influence on Christina Rossetti's writing about Eve: the works of Dante Alighieri. In fact, Christina Rossetti's poem "The Convent Threshold" is deliberately modeled after Dante's Divine Comedy. Also, Christina Rossetti's sonnet sequence Monna Innominata uses quotations from Dante and Petrarch to begin each sonnet in the series. Christina Rossetti was an admirer of Dante's The Divine Comedy, as was her father, her brother, and her sister. Swinburne once remarked that Dante worshippers "allowed no other gods on Parnassus...for these [people] there is but one Muse, and Dante is [their] prophet...[they may not] offer sacrifice to any other great Christian...poet such as Milton." Christina Rossetti privileged Dante's works over Milton's; therefore, Rossetti was critical of Milton's writing.

T.B. Macaulay noted that in Dante's Divine Comedy, "His similes...are introduced in a plain, business-like manner." Dante's Divine Comedy is written like a personal narrative, full of intense feelings. Christina Rossetti's own personal way of expressing her religious fervor ran parallel to this description of Dante's work. His work has a sense of light and dark, reflected also in the Pre-Raphaelite preoccupation with this quality in their paintings. Christina Rossetti often pictured the world of vanity in her Eve poetry with the same sense of despair as in Dante's writing. For Christina
Rossetti, Milton's classical allusions, especially in reference to Eve, ran in opposition to the medieval iconography of Dante's work. The medieval iconography in Dante's works most notably influences Rossetti's "Goblin Market." The symbolism in this work takes on a Tractarian, sacramental quality. Christina Rossetti's work definitely displays imagination in poetry as a blend of Dantesque, Pre-Raphaelite, and Tractarian aesthetics.24

Tractarian Influence

In her poetry, Christina Rossetti imitated the ornamental and sacramental form that is characteristic of the writings of the leading Tractarians: John Henry Newman, John Keble, John Ruskin, and Isaac Williams.25 The imagery practiced by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood closely parallels the aesthetics in the writing of the Oxford Movement. In July of 1833, the Oxford Movement was officially born when Keble gave a sermon that stated that liberalism attacked the foundations of the High Church of England.26 The people who supported Keble and Newman's theological stance were called Tractarians; they upheld the beliefs of the Church of England. Christ was their personal savior.

The only true sacraments were Baptism and the Eucharist according to Tractarian faith.27 Baptism washed away the stain of the original sin brought about by Eve's fall from grace. The sacrament of the Eucharist, symbolically consuming
the body and drinking the blood of Christ the savior of mankind, filled the void of desire created by Eve's sin. Participating in the Eucharist also represented the bond of sisterhood and brotherhood for all Tractarian believers. Every person was viewed as a sinner who was shadowed by Eve's disobedience but who could be redeemed as Eve was through repentance. "Everything necessary for salvation could be found in scripture." The focus of the Oxford Movement was that it was a Christian writer's revolution. A fellow student of Keble's, John Henry Newman, became the soul of this religious movement. A series of Newman's sermons and essays were published in pamphlets and entitled The Tracts of the Times; therefore, the followers of this religious movement became known as Tractarians. Communion with God was emphasized in the Tracts.

Christina Rossetti was born in 1830 just as the philosophy and preaching of Newman, Keble and Froude was becoming popular at Oxford. Although her writings postdate the fervor of the Oxford Movement, the inspiration of these Anglicans lived on in the writings of people like Christina Rossetti. In fact, G.B. Tennyson stated that "Christina Rossetti is the true inheritor of the Tractarian devotional mode in poetry. Most of what the Tractarians advocated in theory and sought to put into practice came to fruition in the poetry of Christina Rossetti."

Christina Rossetti's devotional poetry deals with the
relationship between Eve, Christ, and the daughters of Eve and is similar to the religious poetry of the Tractarians, like John Keble's *The Christian Year*. She read this book often and kept it at her bedside.\(^{34}\) *The Christian Year* concentrates on human isolation from God and leads the reader "through a personal quest toward union with God and cognizance of His Word."\(^{35}\) Rossetti's poetry reflects the Tractarian belief that we all move from "isolation in the temporal world and ignorance of its meaning to a recognition that the divine reality not only includes [us] but makes sense of it all."\(^{36}\)

Rossetti saw Eve as the first woman dealing with this sense of alienation and exploring her relationship with God. Tractarian poetry often uses the rhetorical strategy of question and answer to explore this union with God's Word. Rossetti's poems "Bird or Beast?" "What Would I Give?" and "Who Shall Deliver Me?" follow this format. Alienation from God is also contemplated in Christina Rossetti's poem "A Better Resurrection" which ends with the line "O Jesus, drink of me" (l. 24).\(^{37}\) The speaker in the poem discovers eternal life, given to mankind by Christ's sacrifice and celebrated in the Eucharist. The speaker in the poem identifies with the chalice and the wine and in this way, becomes one with the Deity. These lines are reminiscent of her poem "Goblin Market" where the Tractarian belief in the sacrament of the Eucharist is tied to Christina Rossetti's interest in sisterhood as part of the creation/redemption cycle. The love
relationship, the mystical union between God and the redeemed, sets the postulant free.

The members of the Oxford Movement believed in God's munificence. An appreciation of but also a skepticism towards the details of the natural world is a precept of Pre-Raphaelite and Tractarian belief systems. This absorption with the vanity of the natural world is directly related to the fall of Eve in Eden. In poems like "An Apple Gathering," "Another Spring," "The First Spring Day," "A Better Resurrection," "Sweet Death," "Dream-Love," and "L.E.L." Christina Rossetti displays this absorption with God's natural abundance and also the irony of living wholly obsessed in that world of vanity.

Milton's Eve falls, in part, due to her abuse of imagination. The Tractarians, however, saw imagination concentrated on the symbols of Christ as assistance for the soul to rise to Heaven. Imagination did not "lead humanity away from the Lord through deceitful illusions of the mind" as long as piety directed the imagination towards heaven and not towards the material world as it did with Eve. The conflict in Christina Rossetti's poetry often hinges on these two views of imagination, the sensual versus the divine, reworking Milton's vision of temptation in the form of imagination. Rossetti believed, as is evident in her poetry, that Eve was predestined to succumb to imagination's
temptation so that she could perform her function in the universal creation chain with Christ.

In this way, the Oxford Movement was associated with the concept of imagination in writing. The Tractarians believed that "the creation of poetry was a religious activity analogous to the work of God," the ultimate "creator." Another aspect to God's work that the members of the Tractarian community adhered to was an obligation to guide others to the proper path. Tractarianism fostered sisterhood and brotherhood. It is not surprising that much of Christina Rossetti's life, which is reflected in her poetry, was centered on volunteer work such as her charity work in the home for fallen women, her work with factory girls, her protests against vivisection, and her devotion to ailing family members. Her religious poetry and her social, community volunteer work were examples of her Christian faith in action; she believed that it was the mission of the daughters of Eve to unite all women.

The High Anglican church supported "the establishment of sisterhoods allowing women to escape from the restrictive work of the home in order to take on significant [spiritual] responsibility." Christina Rossetti was attracted to the life of sisterhood, and her older sister, Maria, entered the community of All Saints Sisterhood on Margaret Street in 1874; this community was founded in 1851. The concept of
sisterhood tied all women to each other as the daughters of Eve.

Rossetti's view of sisterhood is connected to her vision of Eve's role and the roles of the daughters of Eve in the creation cycle. Christina Rossetti's use of Tractarian tenets affected the development of her vision of Eve from her early poetry (1846 to 1860) to "Goblin Market" written in 1859 to her poetry and prose concerning Eve and the daughters of Eve written from 1860 to 1894. "The Convent Threshold" and "Three Nuns" like "Goblin Market" reveal that there is greater fidelity in Christ than through earthly love, that the impure soul, like Eve's, can be cleansed of decay by Christ's love. By experiencing the benefits of the "sisterhood" in each of these poems, a woman can become closer to Christ and therefore closer to the first mother, Eve. Love is fully consummated, however, in the "sacramental domain" of heaven. Love in the earthly world is transient. This world of sisterhood is another quality Christina Rossetti found lacking in Milton's Paradise Lost.

Pre-Raphaelite Influence

Christina Rossetti not only reacted to the "brotherhood" in Paradise Lost but was also greatly influenced by another brotherhood, the Pre-Raphaelites. Because it was named the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, all women were naturally excluded from membership despite the fact that Christina Rossetti was
a major contributing figure to their literary publication The Germ and often was the subject who sat for the portraits they painted (along with her mother), including Dante Gabriel's (Rossetti's brother) The Girlhood of Mary Virgin. The first literary victory for the Pre-Raphaelites was the publication of 'Goblin Market' and Other Poems, and it was written by the member [of the group] they excluded.47

The Pre-Raphaelites "combined a reverence for ritual and tradition with an interest in creating images from biblical history that revised many of the current assumptions of aesthetic practice."48 These works of art shared a Ruskinian kind of richness of ornamentation and a vivid use of color with a strange, illuminative sense of light which is also apparent in Christina Rossetti's poetry. Ruskin believed that "the artist must be careful in presenting the detail of nature in order to convey its transcendental truth."49 The diaphanous quality of objects and light in Pre-Raphaelite art and in Christina Rossetti's poetry, representing the presence of God reflected in worldly materialism and nature, is derived from this concept. This relates to John Keble's idea that nature was a hieroglyph of the divine world.50 Ruskin described Typical Beauty, related to the material world, and Vital Beauty, related to the abstract world of moral truths, as important aspects to Pre-Raphaelite painting.

Christina Rossetti's poetry duplicates Ruskin's vision of beauty in the world. The Pre-Raphaelites manifesto included
the love of nature's plentitude, a rebellion against simplistic dualisms or symbolism, worship of medievalism or Romanticism, and a preference for morbid subject matter or melancholy as the source of creativity. All of these are mirrored in Christina Rossetti's Eve poetry. There was a unity and oneness of all things in Rossetti's poetry, tied not only to God but to the mother of mankind, Eve. Nature is depicted in Rossetti's poetry as part of the cycle of the female existence. The dream of heaven's garden, paralleled with the garden of Eden, is often the theme in Christina Rossetti's poems and reflects the influence of the writing of Dante Alighieri on her work.

Cynthia Scheinberg asserts that the vast amount of literary criticism on Christina Rossetti often fails to define Rossetti's poetic identity as an amalgamation of religion, gender and aesthetics. Critics adeptly define her in terms of one construct but not successfully in all three. This author would agree. However, it is not Rossetti's link of the Hebraic and Christian female poet that characterizes Christina Rossetti, as Scheinberg would have you believe, but Rossetti's devotion, as Eve's daughter, to each Victorian woman's role in the Christian creation cycle which combines Rossetti's perspectives on religion, gender, and aesthetics so cohesively.
NOTES FROM CHAPTER 2
PAGES 19-24

5. Marsh 55.
7. LoTempio 75.
10. Ibid. 127.
12. O'Reardon 31.
15. Ibid. 158.
23. Smith 27.
NOTES FROM CHAPTER 2
PAGE 25-31

25. LoTempio 2.
26. Ibid. 4.
27. Ibid. 10.
28. Ibid. 11.
29. LoTempio 70.
30. Ibid. 71.
32. LoTempio 74.
34. LoTempio 81.
36. Schofield 303.
38. LoTempio 42.
39. Ibid. 51.
40. Ibid. 70.
41. Mayberry 128.
42. LoTempio 77.
45. LoTempio 130.
46. Ibid. 131.
48. Bump 324.
CHAPTER 3

Early Poetry: The Birth of Christina Rossetti's Eve

Christina Rossetti's early poetry is the beginning of an evolutionary poetic process in her development of Eve's character. Rossetti's personal life, Tractarian beliefs, and Pre-Raphaelite influence are reflected in "Goblin Market" and in her later poetry and prose where Rossetti fully develops her vision of Eve. The early poems of Christina Rossetti written between 1847 and 1858 reveal her experimentation with the great influence of Eve iconography in her life. "Vanity of Vanities" (1847) and "Sweet Death" (1849)\(^1\) reflect Tractarian tenets, illustrating the connection between cyclic feminist imagery or womb to tomb imagery and the seasonal cycles of nature. Also, this imagery symbolizes the sequence of events from the womb of Eve to the tomb of Christ. These two poems influence Rossetti's later poems about Eve.

This cyclic imagery relates to the creation cycle. Eve is the ultimate mother of Christina Rossetti's sisterhood. The sisterhood and its devotion to the life to come in Christ's love is what fills the void left by vain earthly pleasures in "Vanity of Vanities." Vanity is a vicious circle
that can only be broken by God's judgement of all sinners.

Ah, woe is me for pleasure that is vain,
Ah, woe is me for glory that is pain:
Pleasure that bringeth sorrow at the last,
Glory that at the last bringeth no gain!
So saith the sinking heart, and so again
It shall say till the mighty angel-blast
Is blown, making the sun and moon aghast
And showering down the stars like sudden rain.
And evermore men shall go fearfully
Bending beneath their weight of heaviness;
And ancient men shall lie down wearily,
And strong men shall rise up in weariness;
Yea, even the young shall answer sighingly
Saying one to another: How vain it is!²

The image of the "sinking heart" in this poem recurs in
Christina Rossetti's "Eve" poetry. The "sinking heart" (l. 5)
is juxtaposed to Christ's "sacred heart" of abundant love;
earthly love is transient. The sisterhood represented God's
eternal love which Eve, the first fallen woman, had
temporarily lost access to. In Christina Rossetti's early
poem "Sweet Death," she views the sisterhood of the Oxford
Movement as a "going day by day/Unto the Church to praise and
pray" (ll. 2-3).³ She sees the transience of nature through
the flowers on the graves near the church. "...Youth and
beauty die" but through sisterhood, a woman could attain the
"full harvest" with God in heaven (ll. 17 and 23).

The influence of Tractarianism on Christina Rossetti’s poetry is evident in almost all of her works. "All things are Vanity" in the sonnet "The One Certainty" (June 1849)⁴ is a reference to the Tractarian belief that faith cannot be put in the transient world. This was Eve’s sin in paradise.

Vanity of vanities, the Preacher saith,

All things are vanity. The eye and ear
Cannot be filled with what they see and hear.
Like early dew, or like the sudden breath
Of wind, or like the grass that withereth
Is man, tossed to and fro by hope and fear:
So little joy hath he, so little cheer,
Till all things end in the long dust of death.
To-day is still the same as yesterday,
To-morrow also even as one of them;
And there is nothing new under the sun:
Until the ancient race of Time be run,
The old thorns shall grow out of the old stem,
And morning shall be cold and twilight grey.⁵

The Tractarian belief that nature is a go-between for man and God, revealing the importance of the immutability of heaven through nature’s constancy, is voiced in the lines "the old thorns shall grow out of the old stem,/And morning shall be cold and twilight grey" (ll. 13-4). The "True Vine" is an image that emphasizes the connection between Christ and nature.
as ambassadors between mankind and God. Christ as the "True Vine" is juxtaposed to Eve's forbidden fruit from the "Tree of Life" in Maude, a work of poetry and prose written in 1850, where Rossetti states "Oh for the grapes of the True Vine growing in Paradise./Whose tendrils join the Tree of Life to that which maketh wise." The poem "A Portrait" reflects other Tractarian beliefs: asceticism, forbearance, the love of mankind for Christ, faith in the afterlife, the isolation that Christ's love fills, and ministry to our sisters and brothers in this life of pain.

"A Portrait," written in November of 1850, also reveals Christina Rossetti's Pre-Raphaelite influence and is a significant step along the path to creating her "Eve" poetry. This poem presents the traits of the Victorian woman (love of God, humility, submission, chastity) as the embodiment of feminine traits from medieval culture; these were important concepts to the Pre-Raphaelites. These traits are incorporated into Rossetti's portrait of Eve in her later poetry and prose as well. Christina Rossetti saw these characteristics as human, as those of a devout Christian, a servant of God.

I
She gave up beauty in her tender youth,
Gave up all hope and joy and pleasant ways;
She covered up her eyes lest they should gaze
On vanity and chose the bitter truth.
Harsh towards herself, towards others full of ruth,
Servant of servants, little known to praise,
Long prayers and fasts trenched on her nights and days:
She schooled herself to sights and sounds uncouth
That with the poor and stricken she might make
A home, until the least of all sufficed
Her wants; her own self learned she to forsake,
Counting all earthly gain but hurt and loss.
So with calm will she choose and bore the cross
And hated all for love of Jesus Christ.

II
They knelt in silent anguish by her bed,
And could not weep; but calmly there she lay.
All pain had left her; and the sun's last ray
Shone through upon her, warming into red
The shady curtains. In her heart she said:
"Heaven opens; I leave these and go away;
The Bridegroom calls,—shall the Bride seek to stay?"
Then low upon her breast she bowed her head.
O lily flower, O gem of priceless worth,
O dove with patient voice and patient eyes,
O fruitful vine amid a land of dearth,
O maid replete with loving purities,
Thou bowdest down thy head with friends on earth
To raise it with the saints in Paradise.
In this poem, Rossetti begins to develop her concept that all women should learn the lesson from Eve and avoid using the "eye" to perceive the world of vanity which corrupts the "I." The female "portrait" in this poem is connected to Mary (the second Eve), to the Holy Spirit, and to Christ with the words "lily," "dove," and "fruitful vine." This poem blends Pre-Raphaelite and Tractarian beliefs as it uses the image of Christ as the ultimate bridegroom. Medieval Christian imagery impacted Pre-Raphaelite philosophy; the concept of Christ as bridegroom comes from the medieval metaphor that Mary's womb was a tabernacle where God wed humanity. Christina Rossetti, who turned down suitors but also rejected the sisterhood due to personal incompatibility, saw her love as ultimately fulfilled by Christ's love. She did not want to experience God as the Bible said through her earthbound husband.

"She gave up beauty in her tender youth," the first line of stanza I of "A Portrait," is an example of the Pre-Raphaelite adherence to Ruskin's definition of Typical Beauty which reflects the mutable world. The Pre-Raphaelite predilection towards Biblical imagery, the story of the Bride and Bridegroom related to Christ and his followers, and the illuminative use of light in "the sun's last ray/Shone through her, warming into red/The shady curtains" (II, 11. 3-5) are qualities of Pre-Raphaelite painting. The bride and bridegroom, a reflection of our first parents, is often used
in the New Testament and is included in this poem to reveal the speaker's relationship with God in death. Also reflective of Pre-Raphaelite art is the melancholy tone as in the lines "chose the bitter truth./Harsh towards herself, towards others full of ruth" (I, 11. 4-5). This attitude evolves into a demonstration of medieval feminine charity where the central figure in the poem ministered to "poor and stricken" (I, 1. 9) until she "raised [her] head with the saints in Paradise" (II, 1. 14). Another Pre-Raphaelite influence is the picture of nature reflecting the transcendence of Christ in heaven as in the last six lines of the poem. Later in Christina Rossetti's life, her "Eve" poetry will reflect these attitudes concerning humility and chastity in the world of vanity as first pondered by her in her early Pre-Raphaelite poetry.

Another poem which reflects the skepticism of worldly vanities is "A Fair World Though a Fallen" written on August 30, 1851.12

You tell me that the world is fair in spite
Of the old Fall; and that I should not turn
So to the grave, and let my spirit yearn
After the quiet of the long last night.
Have I then shut mine eyes against the light,
Grief-deafened lest my spirit should discern?
Yet how could I keep silence when I burn?
And who can give me comfort?—Hear the right.
Have patience with the weak and sick at heart:
Bind up the wounded with a tender touch,
Comfort the sad, tear-blinded as they go:—
For, though I failed to choose the better part,
Were it a less unutterable woe
If we should come to love this world too much?\textsuperscript{13}

The belief in ministering to mankind from the Tractarian tenets is present in this poem. The concern displayed in "Goblin Market" for allowing the eye to absorb too much of the world of vanity as Laura does, which is her downfall, is reflected in this poem also. This is Eve's problem as well. The eye in this poem should only absorb God's "light" reflected in charity towards "the weak and sick at heart" (ll. 5 and 9). Although the world is fallen, it still reflects God's "comfort" (ll. 2 and 8).

The Tractarian respect for and adherence to the rules of God is spoken in the first two lines of "A Bruised Reed Shall He Not Break" written in June of 1852\textsuperscript{14}: "I will accept thy will to do and be,/Thy hatred and intolerance of sin" (ll. 1 and 2).\textsuperscript{15} The love relationship between the repentant and Christ, an important tenet of the Oxford Movement, is apparent in many of Christina Rossetti's poems including "A Bruised Reed Shall He Not Break." "Thy will at least to love, that burns within/And thirsteth after Me" (ll. 3 and 4). Another kind of "thirst," the void left by the absence of Christ's love, is found in "The Convent Threshold" and "Echo."

The sisterhood to Christina Rossetti filled the void
created by Eve's sin and was a doorway to heaven where a greater truth and a truer love than here on earth awaited the repentant. She speaks of this in the last stanza of "The Convent Threshold" and in the second stanza of "Echo" (1854). The "yearning eyes" (l. 75) in "The Convent Threshold" and the "thirsting longing eyes" (l. 10) in "Echo" represent the void in the souls of women caused by viewing and desiring the temptations of the material world which is a fall from grace. This emptiness can only be filled by participating in the creation cycle, as mother, artist, or postulant. The sisterhood, as depicted in these poems and in "Goblin Market," provided a bastion to protect women against the corruption of patriarchal dominance. This idea of sisterhood is repeated in Rossetti's poem "Listening" (1854) where the virtues of loyalty and meekness of a Victorian woman are connected to our "noble" mother, Eve. This poem also speaks to the issue of female nothingness brought about by Adam and Eve's exile from Eden.

She listened like a cushat dove
That listens to its mate alone:
She listened like a cushat dove
That love but only one.

Not fair as men would reckon fair,
Nor noble as they count the line:
Only as graceful as a bough,
And tendrils of the vine:
Only as noble as sweet Eve
Your ancestress and mine.

And downcast were her dovelike eyes
And downcast was her tender cheek;
Her pulses fluttered like a dove
To hear him speak.20

Christ is the living vine to Tractarians and in this poem Eve and all members of the sisterhood are connected to the family of man through Christ. This concept of the living, fruitful vine connects Christ to all daughters of Eve and recurs often in Christina Rossetti's poetry. The poem "The World" adds another dimension to her poetic exploration and is a landmark poem in Rossetti's development of her concept of Eve.

"The World," a sonnet written in June of 1854,21 presents a view of material decay in juxtaposition to the description of the strength of sisterly love found in Rossetti's poems.

By day she wooes me, soft, exceeding fair:
But all night as the moon so changeth she;
Loathsome and foul with hideous leprosy
And subtle serpents gliding in her hair.
By day she wooes me to the outer air,
Ripe fruit, sweet flower, and full satiety:
But through the night, a beast she grins at me,
A very monster void of love and prayer.
By day she stands a lie: by night she stands
In all the naked horror of the truth
With pushing horns and clawed and clutching hands.
Is this a friend indeed; that I should sell
My soul to her, give her my life and youth,
Till my feet, cloven too, take hold on hell?²²

In "The World," the world is envisioned as a woman, one who is
"a very monster void of love and prayer" and one "with pushing
horns and clawed and clutching hands" (ll. 8 and 11). This
description sounds very much like Milton's characteristics of
the monstrous mother, Sin, in Paradise Lost. This delineation
is also reminiscent of the characterization of the corrupted
Laura and the goblin men in "Goblin Market." Rossetti says
that she will not "sell [her] soul to her" (l. 13), a concept
that will be fully developed in "Goblin Market" where Laura
sells her soul for the goblin men's wares, which can be
compared here to the world's "ripe fruit" and "full satiety"
(l. 6). This concept is related to Eve, who sold her soul to
Satan for the forbidden fruit in Eden. The vanities of "The
World," compared to Eve's "lost garden Paradise," are also
examined in "An After-Thought" (December 1855).²³ Tractarian
absorption with the afterlife, not with the world of vanity,
is apparent in "An After-Thought" in the lines "Oh come the
day of death, that day/Of rest which cannot pass away!"/When
the last work is wrought, the last/Pang of pain is felt and past,/And the blessed door made fast" (ll. 63-8).

"An After-Thought" also reveals the sisterhood, embodied in Eve and Rachel, who "slumber there [in heaven] forgiven," awaiting "us beneath the tress/Of Paradise, that lap of ease: They wait for us, till God shall please" (ll. 60-3). The "utter ruinous fall," the "bitter fall," of Eve, like the fall of all women, is juxtaposed to God's heavenly reward for the penitent (ll. 18 and 26). What is it that the "Angels could not strip her [Eve] of"? (l. 34) "Yet the accustomed hand for leading,/yet the accustomed heart for love: Sure she kept one part of Eden" (ll. 30-4). All women are connected by their ability to lead and love mankind in God's ways because women are the daughters of Eve; this is Eve's legacy to future generations of women.

Central to Christina Rossetti's poetry on Eve are concepts presented in "A Better Resurrection" from June of 1857.24

I have no wit, no words, no tears;
My heart within me like a stone
Is numbed too much for hopes or fears;
Look right, look left, I dwell alone;
I lift mine eyes, but dimmed with grief
No everlasting hills I see;
My life is in the falling leaf.
O Jesus, quicken me.
My life is like a faded leaf,
My harvest dwindled to a husk;
Truly my life is void and brief
And tedious in the barren dusk;
My life is like a frozen thing,
No bud nor greenness can I see:
Yet rise it shall--the sap of Spring;
O Jesus, rise in me.

My life is like a broken bowl,
A broken bowl that cannot hold
One drop of water for my soul
Or cordial in the searching cold;
Cast in the fire the perished thing,
Melt and remould it, till it be
A royal cup for Him my King:
O Jesus, drink of me. 25

Many of Rossetti's poems, like "A Better Resurrection," have a religious, hymn-like quality reflecting the influence of Rossetti's Tractarian faith. The Tractarian respect for and Dantesque concept of simplicity and plainness is revealed in Rossetti's use of the images of the stone, leaf, and bowl to reveal deeper messages concerning faith. Christ's love relationship with repenting sinners, a twist on the eucharistic theme where the sinner consumes the body and blood of Christ, is revealed in "O Jesus, drink of me" (l. 24).
This also relates to the Pre-Raphaelite concern with medieval iconography. The metaphor of the believer drinking from the breast of Christ, where Christ represents the mother of God's flock, was an image known by Christians from the middle ages. In Rossetti's poem, Christ is asked to reciprocate, to drink from the breasts of the daughters of Eve. A variation of this theme will be used later in "Goblin Market."

A life of celibacy, honored just as much as the married life by the Tractarian faith, is another part of "A Better Resurrection," revealed in the imagery of the words "void," "barren," "frozen," "searching cold." Nature, represented by "a faded leaf" versus "the sap of Spring," reveals the transience of the world versus the eternal beauty of heaven's rewards (I. 9 and 15). Christina Rossetti's poems and prose about Eve, written near the end of her literary career, reflect her poetic experimentation here with Tractarian doctrine including the concepts of simplicity of imagery, respect and adherence to God's laws, love between Christ and the postulant, nature as a reflection of heaven on earth, and faith in the afterlife, not in the world's vanities. Another significant poem in the evolution of Rossetti's Eve is "The Convent Threshold."

"The Convent Threshold," written in July of 1858, holds a power over the author that fills the void left in the poem "The World." The line "There's blood between us, love, my love" opens "The Convent Threshold." The "blood between us"
reveals the speaker's renouncement of her bonds to her lover and to the material world in favor of the sisterhood. There is also the blood of Christ made man which bonds the blood of the family of man and the family of the sisterhood. In addition, there is the blood of the female cycle which ties all women to each other and to the birth of Christ. This ties all women to Mary, the second Eve, and to Eve, the mother of mankind. The "father's blood...[and] brother's blood" is "a bar I cannot pass" (ll. 2 and 3). The blood which binds the patriarchy is not part of Rossetti's existence; she belongs to the "blood" of the sisterhood. Hope and guilt, referred to in "The Convent Threshold," are qualities Christina Rossetti related to Eve in her later poems and to all fallen and redeemed women after Eve. The "sinking heart" from "Vanity of Vanities" is "stained" and "soiled" in "The Convent Threshold" with the corruption of the worldly vision of "love" (ll. 7, 10, 12). Procreative love takes on an incestuous overtone since all men and women are brothers and sisters.

In "The Convent Threshold," attaining heaven's graces will "wash the spot" (l. 14), the site of fallen status brought upon women originally by Eve. The righteous who "sleep at ease among their trees,/Or wake to sing a cadence hymn with Cherubim and Seraphim" in heavenly paradise "bore the Cross" and were "racked, roasted, crushed, wrenched limb from limb" (ll. 22-6) by earthly desires. Women also bear the cross due to patriarchal oppression; their belief in
sisterhood saved them. When women repent the "pleasant sin," (1. 51) their fallen status in God's kingdom, they will "rest in paradise" (1. 69) and take their rightful place next to Eve and Mary Magdalene, who followed the precept presented here by Rossetti to "repent and purge your soul and save" (1. 81).

Female Nothingness

Accompanying the sense of fulfillment and redemption through creation in all of Christina Rossetti's religious poetry, and particularly in her "Eve" poetry, is a deep sense of emptiness. This emptiness is created by the patriarchal vision that the stain of the original sin came from Eve. Male domination of women to keep order after Eve's fall also controls the image of Eve as the perpetuator of mankind's doom. This leaves women with a feeling of guilt and worthlessness, a "nothingness." The "nothingness" of female perspective in the patriarchy is made into a "somethingness" by Christina Rossetti's poetry on Eve. Her "silence and absence" definitely represent "a pregnancy" to Rossetti; it symbolizes her philosophical adherence to the ascetic life which ultimately will bring forth the fruit of life everlasting with Christ.

However, the loneliness of waiting for this day is an arduous task. Because of this, Christina Rossetti takes hope in the changing seasons. The bounty of female imagery is apparent in Rossetti's poetry: her poems are saturated with
the "I" and the "eye," with circles and cycles. The "eye" perceives the material world of vanity which tempts the conscience; therefore, the "eye" affects what the "I," the soul, becomes. In fact, the first person "I" appears in ninety percent of Christina Rossetti's poems. Naming or noting the "nothingness" was one of Adam and Eve's activities in Eden. The "O" is also a symbol for the word "cipher" and this sense of littleness, of the triviality of life, especially for Victorian women, is at the heart of Christina Rossetti's poetry. The circular orifices of the female body are symbolized in Rossetti's works. "God is a circle whose center is everywhere." Eve was the mother of the human race whose Fall in Eden had started a birth series of life, death, and infinity just like "the widening circles that emanate from a single disturbance in the surface of a pond." In the beginning, there was the nothingness of chaos which was filled in the end with the cage of the knowledge of good and evil.

The imagery of female nothingness is an integral part of Christina Rossetti's poetry and is of paramount importance to Rossetti's creation of her poetry about Eve from 1846 to 1859 and to her later poetry and prose. Patriarchal power in a Victorian woman's life adds to the sense of female silencing which is a punishment for all women due to Eve's fall. An example of this can be found in Christina Rossetti's poem "Mary Magadalene" written in February of 1846.
Magdalene, another fallen woman, silently comes "Trembling betwixt hope and fear,/She sought the King of Heaven,/Forsook the evil of her ways,/Loved much, and was forgiven" (11. 17-20). Here "deep repentance" (l. 1) saves her, filling the void that fallen status creates for women. Mary Magdalene and Eve are part of a chain of sacrifice that culminates in Christ's martyrdom for the souls of the repentant.

The imagery of martyrdom is reinforced in the first four stanzas of the poem "The Martyr" (May 1846) where reference is made to a woman ensnared by the emptiness of her fallen state who wants to "win a crown" (l. 12) through repentance and leave life's prison to stand with Eve and her redeemed daughters in heaven.

SEE, the sun hath risen--
Lead her from the prison;
She is young and tender,—lead her tenderly:
May no fear subdue her,
Lest the saints be fewer--
Lest her place in heaven be lost eternally.

Forth she came, not trembling,
No nor yet dissembling
An o'erwhelming terror weighing her down, down;
Little, little heeding
Earth, but only pleading
For the strength to triumph and to win a crown.
All her might was rallied
To her heart; not pallid
Was her cheek, but glowing with a glorious red;
Glorious red and saintly,
Never paling faintly,
But still flushing, kindling still, without thought of
dread.

On she went, on faster,
Trusting in her Master,
Feeling that His eye watched o'er her lovingly;
He would prove and try her,
But would not deny her
When her soul had past, for His sake, patiently.38

The shape of this poem looks like a crown or a cross. The
diaphanous quality of Pre-Raphaelite painting is used in the
lines about the "glorious red" (l. 15). This also refers to
the Tractarian concept of guilt redeemed by following
Christian tenets and believing in God's love. The "eye" of
"her Master" which "watched o'er her lovingly" is the symbol
of redemption (ll. 20-1). God's eye stands in contrast to the
symbol of the eye presented in many of Rossetti's poems which
represents the mark of guilt carried by the daughters of Eve
due to Eve's fall. Eve sinned because she looked on vanity;
she disobeyed God and dared to view and eat from the "twelve-
fold fruited" tree (l. 14).39 The woman in the poem is lead
from her "prison" of silence by "patiently" attending to God's word until Judgement Day. Her heart is given "might" (l. 13) through the sacrifice of Christ's heart of love for mankind.

The Word of God is the only thing that will fill the void of the soul which is explored in the poem "The One Certainty" where the circular "eye and ear" try vainly to fill nothing with the "things" of the material world. Vain pleasures try to fill the void in "Vanity of Vanities." These concepts are reiterated in "Sweet Death" (February 1849) where young blossoms and beauty die but the God of truth is the "full harvest" (l. 23).

The poem "A Portrait" ends with the exclamations "O lily flower, O gem of priceless worth,/O dove with patient voice and patient eyes,/O fruitful vine amid a land of death,/O maid replete with loving purities..." (ll. 23-6). The circle of "O" as a symbol of the female is related here to the Virgin Mary, to the Holy Spirit, and to Christ. The imagery of supping from Christ's cup, a symbol of emptiness transformed into fulfillment, is a part of "The Three Enemies." The cup Christ drains is full of the "unutterable woe" of human misery brought about by Eve's fall from grace which Christ redeems through his suffering and death and replaces the contents of the cup with love. This imagery will appear again in "Goblin Market" where Laura "sups" with the goblin men instead of Christ and consumes her own destruction.

The poem "Echo" also examines the end of human misery;
desire ends when the body dies and is replaced by the longing to be with God. "Oh harps, oh crowns of plenteous stars,/Oh green palm branches many-leaved--Eye hath not seen, nor ear hath heard,/Nor heart conceived" is another poetic creation that illustrates the loss of desire in the poem "Paradise" (February 1854). These lines indicate the interrelationship of a woman's soul to nature and to Christ (ll. 37-40). The heart of Christ is like the female womb, conceiving the "word" of God made into human flesh. Rossetti considers the beauty of the "flowers" and "songs" of Eden which Eve sacrificed by eating from the "Tree of Life" (1. 25).

Another poem with a similar theme is "The Bourne" (February 1854) with its "womb to tomb" discussions of time. In "The Bourne," a poem about death and burial, Rossetti uses circular imagery once again to reveal the emptiness of worldly vanity.

Underneath the growing grass,
Underneath the living flowers,
Deeper than the sound of showers:
There we shall not count the hours
By the shadows as they pass.

Youth and health will be but vain,
Beauty reckoned of no worth:
There a very little girth
Can hold round what once the earth
Seemed too narrow to contain.

The womb and tomb are literally hollow representations of life and death and are tied to Eve's fall and to Christ's redemption.

Silence and song, absence and filled absence which relates to the female birthing cycle as well as feminine voicelessness in a patriarchal world are symbols in the poem "Dream-Love" written in May of 1854. Also in this poem is life's stage, another circle, depicted in "And what hath autumn/To give us in its place?/Draw close the curtains/Of branched evergreen..." (ll. 55-8). Silence and song are related to death and rebirth in nature in "The First Spring Day" (March 1855). Christina Rossetti's poem "Shut Out" (January 1856) also discusses the silent anguish of Eve when barred by the "shadowless spirit" from the rewards of paradise due to her fall from grace. Rossetti related Eve's feeling of isolation in "Shut Out" to her own life as a Victorian woman and as a member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood; there were areas in life where she felt alienated.

A different depiction of isolation is apparent in Rossetti's poem "A Birthday," written in November of 1857, which alludes to the birth of Christ. Christ's date of birth is a birthday for mankind as well. This poem reflects Tractarian tenets. There is mention of the grapes

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representing Christ as the vine, the fruit of life for Christian souls. The color "purple" is mentioned in "A Birthday"; Christ as the King of the world is often dressed in the colors of royalty when ascending into heaven. The "love" Rossetti refers to is the Lord. The isolated place of woman in Victorian society is filled by Rossetti through a relationship with a "silent" partner, God. Unlike her father, brothers, and suitors, Christ is a physically absent creator who Christina Rossetti can speak through in this poem. She uses the voice of religious belief to manipulate male constructs about women.

My heart is like a singing bird
    Whose nest is in a watered shoot;
My heart is like an apple-tree
    Whose boughs are bent with thick-set fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
    That paddles in a halcyon sea;
My heart is gladder than all these
    Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down,
    Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
Carve it in doves, and pomegranates,
    And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
    In leaves, and silver fleurs-de-lys;
Because the birthday of my life
Is come, my love is come to me.\textsuperscript{54}

In "A Birthday," Rossetti parallels a heart with an apple and "a shell that paddles in a halcyon sea" (1. 6), all round images and all images of the beginning of life. The circular, feminine imagery in this poem is related to the "birthday" of Christ, the sacred "heart." The heart of Christ is connected to the hearts of all of the daughters and sons of Eve, and Eve's heart is always full of love for mankind, as Christ's is, in Rossetti's poetry. The apple (1. 3) can be seen as seasonal imagery and as a symbol of the fall that Christ redeems. The "fleurs-de-lys" (1. 14) is often associated with the innocence of Mary. The peacock's eyes (1. 12), which also appear in Rossetti's poem, "Bird or Beast?" represent God's omnipresence. These eyes also symbolize the soul tainted by the temptations of the world of vanity.

Another view of the tainted soul appears in Rossetti's poem "A Better Resurrection." This poem reveals the circular imagery of a life as a "broken bowl" which "cannot hold/One drop of water for my soul" and yet the bowl is "melt and remould[ed]...till it be/A royal cup for Him my King:/O Jesus, drink of me" (ll. 17-24).\textsuperscript{55} This depiction is similar to the idea of feasting as a fall from innocence and then eventual restoration of purity as in the poem "Goblin Market." It is also a renaming of Rossetti's concern with the original fall from innocence (the broken bowl) and the worldly temptations
created from that fall which are redeemed by the icon of the Holy Grail, the cup of Christ's mercy. Christina Rossetti's interest in the depiction of Eve reflects a conflict inside herself. The different sides of Rossetti's personality are another form of "broken bowl"; Rossetti struggles to fuse the "Laura" and "Lizzie" of "Goblin Market," the procreator and creator, inside herself. She wants to be whole so that she can consume and be consumed by God.

Our souls complete the birth/death/rebirth cycle by meeting again in heaven's paradise in "One Day," written in June of 1857. "Memory" (November 1857) and "L.E.L." (February 1859) are poems about female isolation and loneliness. Images of void and emptiness are a very important part of Christina Rossetti's poetic repertoire leading finally to her poems and prose in later life concerning the depiction of Eve.

Part of the punishment for the Fall in Genesis is longing/desire/lust. There was no lack in Eden; therefore, no need for wanting. This desire as punishment, an empty circle like the womb, was not only embodied in sexual or physical appetite and was not only the need to produce children. The part that intrigued Christina Rossetti the most was the "want" of God that was created when Adam and Eve were banished from paradise. "Ultimately one can write only to fill a void or at the least to situate, in relation to the most lucid part of ourselves, the place where this
incommensurable abyss yawns within us."®® "Awareness of absence thus results in imagined or reenacted presence: a re-collection or re-membering of what was lost."®

This is a perfect description of Christina Rossetti's poetry about Eve. Writing fills the void left by Eve's sin. The Tractarians encouraged the use of imagination in writing to pay tribute to God's benevolence. The originator of "desire" is Eve, which is implied in many of Rossetti's "seasonal cycle" poems including "Winter: My Secret" written in November of 1857.®® Winter represents the end of life (similar to Eve and Adam's banishment from Eden) and yet life is renewed at Easter time when Christ is resurrected (like Christ's redemption of the fall). Human beings must not put too much "trust" (l. 23)®® in the seasonal cycle because the physical world is the site of temptation. Faith must be placed in God alone. The hollowness of a life doomed on earth without God was a hellish pit®® or tomb for Rossetti. Dante's Hell is also one of concentric circles.®®

Circular imagery, symbolizing woman, female nothingness, and female significance in the creation and redemption of sin, abounds in Christina Rossetti's poetry. In "Cousin Kate" (November 1859),®® Christina Rossetti concludes with the concepts of "wedding ring" and "coronet" (11. 43 and 48).®® These circular images are related to the female orifices and cycle as well as to the grandeur of God's eternal love and the loss of innocence which are themes Rossetti pursues in her
"Eve" poetry, beginning with "Goblin Market." The coronet relates to Christ's regal crown as God and to the crown of thorns, the punishment of man's fallen status brought about by Eve's disobedience and redeemed by Christ's love. In the poem "Spring" (1859), the "seeds" and "stone of fruits" tell "of the hidden life/That breaks forth underneath,/Life nursed in its grave by Death" (ll. 1-9). Christ is the seed of "hidden life" (l. 7) for Rossetti. God instigated the cycle of creation, life and death, perpetuated by Eve, Mary, and all women. In this same poem, Rossetti reveals that "the sun has power," (l. 27) that the cycle of the seasons/the cycle of creation is related to "the Son" of God who has power over life and death.

The world of reserve of the Oxford Movement and the world of sensuality of the Pre-Raphaelites were in opposition, and Christina Rossetti began to reconcile these differences in her early poetry concerning Eve. Eve, like Christina Rossetti, had been torn between the sensuality of the material world and obedience to God's laws and will. Christina Rossetti saw that this conflict was resolved through the fall and redemption of mankind. Women as creators/procreators were an essential part of mankind's birth and death which reconciles the Pre-Raphaelite mutable world with the Tractarian immutable world to come, which fills the void of female nothingness left by the original sin. The vanity of the material world existed due to the fall of Eve. The fallen
world was corrupted, not like Eden, which was free of lust. Even so, God's presence could still be discovered in Nature.\textsuperscript{70} Nature was a link between fallen man and the divine. The greatest test of faith was the material world, for Christina Rossetti and for Eve.\textsuperscript{71} A crucial poem in Rossetti's development of her version of Eve, which contains the elements of the natural world's vanity and temptation which creates a vacuum, an emptiness in a woman's soul that only God can fill, is Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market."
4. Rossetti 119.
5. Crump 72.
13. Ibid. 302.
14. Ibid. 150.
18. Ibid. 46.
20. Ibid.
22. Crump 76.
24. Ibid. 192.
25. Crump 68.
27. William Rossetti 342.
30. Willbern 247.
31. Ibid. 249.
32. Ibid. 253.
33. Ibid.
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35. Ibid. 254.
37. Rossetti 92.
40. Rossetti 117.
41. Crump 74.
42. Rossetti 286.
43. Ibid. 181.
44. Crump 221.
45. Rossetti 311.
46. Crump 142.
47. Rossetti 312.
48. Crump 123.
49. Rossetti 315.
50. Ibid. 321.
51. Crump 56.
53. Rossetti 335.
54. Crump 36.
55. Ibid. 68.
56. Rossetti 331.
57. Ibid. 334.
58. Ibid. 345.
61. Willbern 250.
63. Crump 47.
64. Willbern 253.
65. Ibid. 254.
66. Rossetti 347.
68. Rossetti 346.
69. Crump 34.
71. LoTempio 115.
"Among the many approaches offered to interpret Christina's artistry, it seems as if all roads lead to "Goblin Market."¹ In actuality, all roads for Christina Rossetti lead from "Goblin Market" (April 27, 1859),² as she continuously developed her evolving image of Eve. Christina Rossetti's early poetry written from 1847 to 1858 that reflects Tractarian and Pre-Raphaelite imagery and the exploration of female nothingness influences her conception of "Goblin Market." "Goblin Market" is then an inspiration for Christina Rossetti's later poetry and prose on Eve, composed between 1860 and her death in 1894.

The poem "Goblin Market" tells a tale of two sisters, Laura and Lizzie. (See Appendix I for a reproduction of the entire poem.) Laura succumbs to the temptations presented by the goblin men to buy and eat their delicious fruits. She subsequently wastes away. Lizzie sacrifices herself to the goblin men to save Laura's life. The goblins attempt to corrupt Lizzie with the juices of their delicious fruit, but she adamantly resists their advances. Laura eats the fruit
and sucks the juices from the body of Lizzie, put there by the goblins during Lizzie's temptation, and Laura's life spirit is restored. In the end, Laura and Lizzie are pictured years later as the mothers of children. Laura recites to the children the story of the haunting adventure with the goblin men, how "her sister stood in deadly peril to do her good, and win the fiery antidote" (ll. 557-9).³ The poem's last lines contain this moral adage: "'For there is no friend like a sister'" (l. 562). Several of Rossetti's poems written before "Goblin Market" contribute to the birth of this poem.

"May," written on November 20, 1855, is a precursor to "Goblin Market."⁴

I cannot tell you how it was;
But this I know; it came to pass
Upon a bright and breezy day
When May was young; ah, pleasant May!
As yet the poppies were not born
Between the blades of tender corn;
The last eggs had not hatched as yet,
Nor any bird foregone its mate.

I cannot tell you what it was;
But this I know; it did but pass.
It passed away with sunny May,
With all sweet things it passed away,
And left me old, and cold, and grey.⁵
In this poem, Christina Rossetti outlines a betrayal by the sensuality of nature just as she does in "Goblin Market."

May is the season of rebirth. The narrator is young in stanza one, but by stanza two, the speaker has become "old, cold, and grey" (1. 13) just as the youth is sapped from Laura by eating the fruit of the goblin men. "May" is also one of Rossetti's poems about seasonal cycles, related to the female cycle. "Sonnet 14" of Monna Innominata also discusses the emptiness of life once physical beauty has decayed. Nature is renewed by the seasons but the mutable world betrays the narrator of "May" just as it does with Laura in "Goblin Market." The narrator's and Laura's souls are drained away in this process.

"From House to Home" was written five months before Christina Rossetti wrote "Goblin Market."

This poem begins with an Eden-like description of a place in nature where man and beast "took/their ease" (1. 21).

The cyclic description of nature in this garden paradise is reflected later in "Goblin Market." This "earthly paradise supremely fair/...lured me from the goal" (1. 8). The narrator later refers to the "earthly paradise" as "my house of lies" (1. 202). This is reminiscent of Rossetti's earlier Tractarian poetry where nature is viewed as a go-between for God and man, but nature is also seen as a world of vain temptations to be viewed with suspicion. These lines are also reflective of Rossetti's Pre-Raphaelite poetry where nature reflects the immutability of heavenly paradise.
The main characters described in the poem "From House to Home" represent Adam and Eve as well as Christ, the "Sun of Love" (l. 182), and even Christina Rossetti herself. When "life swoons" from the narrator, she hears a "spirit rejoicing" over her: "'Our sister, she hath suffered long.'—/One answered: 'Make her see.'" (ll. 105-8). This quotation refers to Rossetti's belief in the power of the sisterhood as the way for the "eye" to create a strong personae or "I." A woman appears to the narrator who drinks a cup "brimfull of loathing and of bitterness" (l. 146). This character resembles Eve and the character Laura in "Goblin Market," representatives of all fallen women.

The narrator of "From House to Home" views the afterlife where the "multitudes," regardless of gender, are "made equal to the angels" (l. 165-6). These "multitudes" are engulfed in tongues of fire. "Therefore in patience I possess my soul;/Yea, therefore as a flint I set my face,/To pluck down, to build up again the whole—" (ll. 205-7) is an illustration of Rossetti's connection of the first person pronoun "I" with the spiritual conscience and with the human face as a mirror of this. The righteous drink from a different "bitter cup" than the fallen just as the fruit of the goblin men destroy Laura, but through the purity of love and sisterhood in Lizzie, the fruits restore Laura. This poem has autobiographical, spiritual, and philosophical elements which
Christina Rossetti continues to perfect while writing "Goblin Market."

As a teenager, Rossetti's favorite story was *Melmoth the Wanderer.* This Gothic novel, written by the Irish author Charles Robert Maturin in 1820, is a series of interrelated tales, similar to the story of Faust. Melmoth's character is reminiscent of Satan in Milton's *Paradise Lost.* Melmoth is condemned to an existence of searching for salvation, isolated from humanity by immortality. He sells his soul for knowledge but only reaps despair. "Tale of the Indians" relates the tragic love affair of Melmoth and the heroine, Immalleé, whose Christian love and faith might redeem her love. Her affair with Melmoth brings her to the brink of temptation to renounce moral order and embrace despair. Immalleé and her baby are destroyed by the corruption and greed of those around her.

Immalleé is paralleled with Eve; both are "introduced to the knowledge of the world, and learn to weep and fear, dreaming always of [their] lost innocence." Christina Rossetti wrote a poem on September 21, 1847 entitled "Immalleé" that catalogues nature much in the same way she enumerates the characteristics of the fruit in "Goblin Market." Melmoth is a demon lover much like the goblin men in "Goblin Market." *Melmoth the Wanderer* had "a long lastin g hold on Christina Rossetti's creative imagination" and is obviously a source for one of Rossetti's masterpieces, "Goblin Market."
Also in her teens, Christina Rossetti prepared for her Christian confirmation by reading the Prayerbook text for Holy Communion which makes clear that "so is the danger great if we receive the same [Holy Communion] unworthily. For then we be guilty of the body and blood of Christ our Saviour. We eat and drink our own damnation." These concepts are reflected in the eating of the goblin food in "Goblin Market," which symbolizes the guilty who contribute to the suffering of Christ and therefore eat their own damnation.

Christina Rossetti's exposure to experiential, Tractarian, and Pre-Raphaelite influences culminated in the writing of the praise-worthy and controversial poem "Goblin Market." Her brother Dante's idealization of his model Lizzie Siddall may have contributed to the formulation of this poetic work. Christina saw Dante Gabriel as having a "voracious appetite" for the charms of Lizzie Siddall which victimized her. Rossetti speaks of this in her poem "In an Artist's Studio" written on December 24, 1856 where she describes a painter's artistic process and portraits (Dante Gabriel is presumed to be the subject of this poem). Line 9 of this poem reads "He feeds upon her face by day and night." This may have lead Christina Rossetti to the plot for her poem about Lizzie and Laura who are victimized by another kind of "voracious appetite." Christina Rossetti was also disenchanted by the idealization of women in the sonnet sequences of Dante Alighieri and Petrarch and by the depiction
of Eve in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Rossetti attempted to rework the images of Beatrice and Laura in her "sonnet of sonnets," *Monna Innominata* and revise the depiction of Milton's Eve in "Goblin Market."

Christina Rossetti believed that Dante Gabriel, Dante Alighieri, Petrarch, and Milton used the outer beauty of Lizzie, Beatrice, Laura, and Eve as inspiration for their art but contributed nothing poetically to the immortality of these women's souls. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton describes Eve: 
"...and with eyes/Of conjugal attraction unreprov'd,/And meek surrender, half imbracing leand/On our first Father, half her swelling Breast/Naked met his under the flowing Gold/Of her loose tresses hid: he in delight/Both of her Beauty and submissive Charms..." (Book IV, ll. 492-8). Likewise, Laura in "Goblin Market" accepts superficial beauty as indicative of a deeper goodness when she says, "How fair the vine must grow/Whose grapes are so luscious;/How warm the wind must blow/Thro' those fruit bushes" (ll. 60-3). This is also reminiscent of Eve's narcissistic view of her own reflection in the water in Book IV of *Paradise Lost*.

"Goblin Market" may have been Christina Rossetti's attempt to liberate these women (Beatrice, Laura, Eve, Lizzie Siddall) to give them a voice so that they could speak for themselves. Christina Rossetti said that she intended the poem as a fairy tale, not as an allegory. What began as a simple creative work, however, inspired Rossetti's future
writings in the exploration of female themes, culminating in poetry and prose that reflected many years of contemplation about her predecessor Eve.

One year before Christina Rossetti wrote "Goblin Market" she and her mother sat for a portrait by her brother Dante Gabriel entitled The Girlhood of Mary Virgin.\(^{23}\) "The Virgin was not just a receptacle for God's seed but was an active participant in the creative process."\(^{24}\) This portrait is the quintessence of Pre-Raphaelite creation, exhibiting the innocence and spiritual transcendence of the Virgin Mary and at the same time, revealing the erotic sensuality of the material world juxtaposed to the moral world of the righteous. Christina Rossetti's poetry debates these same issues through similar imagery. The appetites of the reader are tempted, and focus on the strength of morality in sisterhood and devotion to Christ's earthly example is emphasized as a way to combat life's temptations. The redirection of sensuality into a socially acceptable channel, seeing it as a reflection of God's presence in the universe, is part of the Christina Rossetti's Tractarian belief in reserve.\(^ {25}\) These elements are explored in detail in "Goblin Market."

In 1848, the same year that Rossetti posed for her brother's painting, Christina Rossetti also posed for James Collinson's personal portrait of her.\(^ {26}\) Christina Rossetti is delineated as diminutive and meek with eyes averted.\(^{27}\) She is viewed as an artist and typical Victorian woman in the
personal portrait and as the image of the virtuous procreator in the painting of the Virgin. These two paintings represent the qualities that Christina Rossetti would later embody in the characters of Laura and Lizzie in "Goblin Market." These paintings also represent the existence of the seer and the seen, the eye and what the eye symbolizes and perceives, the "I" (one's inner self or soul).

The "eye" as the organ of the perception of reality cannot always "conceive" what the "I" or the individual's imagination can create. This idea is related to the conception of life in the womb. The "conception" of the "eye" and the "I" also directly relates to the idea of the separated self, the creator and procreator represented in the Pre-Raphaelite paintings Rossetti sat for. "This is the dichotomy, the portrait of two female characters, as it appears in "Goblin Market."

Laura is the artist and Lizzie is the procreator. The poem concludes with the procreator, Lizzie, saving the artist Laura from her risk-taking adventures with the goblin men.

Laura and Lizzie symbolize, respectively, the creator Eve and the procreator Mary; Mary's offspring, Christ, redeems the fall of mankind just as Lizzie saves Laura from temptation. Freudian psychological criticism sees the image of the mother as central to this poem. The fusion of two souls, the fallen woman and the procreator who regenerates her, was Christina Rossetti's theme in "Goblin Market" and her own
personal quest as a Victorian woman, trying to reconcile the differing images of a female. Christina Rossetti's study of the Bible showed her that women were the "image bearers" of God on earth, personally and through the birth of offspring. Also related to this idea is Rossetti's depiction of Laura at the end of the poem in the role of storyteller, explaining the legend of the goblin men to the audience of her and Lizzie's children. There are actually two storytellers here: Laura and Christina Rossetti. Rossetti used her identity as writer to integrate her personal conflict between the sinner and the redeemer. This also reveals Rossetti's conflict with the roles women in Victorian England were allowed to adopt. "Like Maude, 'Goblin Market' depicts multiple heroines, each representing alternative possibilities of selfhood for women." Christina Rossetti was a woman of Italian ancestry, a woman of passion and vanity who tried to curb her ways through the teachings of John Keble in his work Ars Poetica. Keble emphasizes the virtue of reserved demeanor and the ascetic life in this work. "Goblin Market" on a psychoanalytic level is Christina Rossetti's attempt to reconcile these disparate sides of her personality: the creative being and the domesticated Victorian woman. Laura and Lizzie are like Eve and like Christina Rossetti, the fragmented female self struggling to become balanced. In another painting by Dante Rossetti, "Hesterna Rosa,"
Christina is posed in a bacchanalian setting, similar to the plot of "Goblin Market": she is looking away from frame with her eyes covered. Rossetti's presence is carefully controlled...[the] figure is inhibited in her sensuality, covering her face...with a flowery coronet serving to bind her hair rather than loosely sitting on freed hair like the other, more abandoned female figure [in the portrait]. This depiction is parallel to the description of the "coronet" of legitimacy that is denied the child of the fallen woman in the poem "Cousin Kate" (l. 49). In Christina Rossetti's poem "A Portrait," she discusses a woman who "covered up her eyes lest they should gaze/On vanity..." (ll. 3 and 4). This is related to the poem "One Certainty" where the "things" of the world of vanity try to fill the orb of the eye and the void of the soul, or "I," but to no avail.

In stanzas two, three, and four of the poem "Eye Hath Not Seen" written on May 1, 1852, Rossetti portrays "weary eyes" that "Rest on the green of Paradise" and on the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil where Eve's sin of disobedience occurred.

Oh good, oh blest! but who shall say

How fair, how fair,

Is the light-region where no cloud

Darkens the air,

Where weary eyes

Rest on the green of Paradise?
There cometh not the wind nor rain
    Nor sun nor snow:
The Trees of Knowledge and of Life
    Bud there and blow,
    Their leaves and fruit
Fed from an undecaying root.

There Angels flying to and fro
    Are not more white
Than Penitents some while ago,
    Now Saints in light:
    Once soiled and sad--
Cleansed now and crowned, fulfilled
    and glad. 40

The imagery of the penitent "crowned" (l. 18) is a circular image that appears in many of Rossetti's poems. The fallen woman is redeemed and crowned in heaven just like Eve, Mary, and Mary Magdalene. The penitents in heaven, "once soiled and sad," (l. 17) now look upon the "light" shining on the Tree of Life with redeemed eyes due to Christ's sacrifice and love for mankind just as Laura "sees" with new eyes after Lizzie's sacrifice redeems her innocence. The fruit from the "Trees of Knowledge and of Life" are "fed from an undecaying root" of God's faithful plan, not from the root of death that feeds the fruit that Laura buys from the goblin men. The root of death
was brought about by Eve's original sin which becomes the sin of origin.

The first stanza of Rossetti's poem "I will lift up mine Eyes unto the Hills," a section of "Divers Worlds. Time and Eternity," describes a similar view of heaven that the "Eyes of [her] heart" absorb, where "the trees of Paradise" are a "refreshing green for heart and eyes" and the streets and gateways are "pearled" (ll. 4, 6, 8, 9). In the second stanza of a section of the poem "Divers Worlds. Time and Eternity" called "Escape to the Mountain" which was composed before 1893, Rossetti presents a picture that is reminiscent of the distorted vision of Laura after she eats the fruit of the goblin men. It is apparent that the poem "Goblin Market" influenced Rossetti's later poems concerning the fallen woman's hollow vision of death. Christ's sacrifice could redeem a woman's sight. "Lo what I see is Death that shadows me:/Yet whilst I, seeing, draw a shuddering breath,/Death like a mist grows rare perceptibly./Beyond the darkness light, Beyond the scathe/Healing, beyond the Cross a palm-branch tree" (ll. 17-21).

Christina Rossetti's poem "The Dead City," written on April 9, 1847, depicts an Eden-like place where voluptuous fruit represents the pleasures of the flesh which destroy the soul. It is the antithesis of the feast of Holy Communion which restores the faithful. The faithful are described with eyes shut; they awaken "to the sunlight of true joy." In
Christina Rossetti's *The Face of the Deep*, she states that the only way to escape poisoning impurity is to choose not to behold it:

Cover and turn away the eye lest it should behold it...for the blessed pure in heart who shall see God, copy their Lord the Holy One Who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and Who cannot look on iniquity.\(^{46}\)

Lizzie in "Goblin Market" uses this "unseeing" approach to resist the goblin men (ll. 50-1). This is just one of many examples that illustrates how Lizzie imitates Christ to help liberate Laura. In Rossetti's works "One Certainty" and "A Testimony" as well as in "Goblin Market," the theme of Ecclesiastes 1:8 (Rossetti's favorite book of the Bible) is repeated: "The eye is not satisfied with seeing."\(^{47}\)

Laura cannot get enough of the material world; she has fallen away from the spirit of Christ. This was also Eve's fateful error: she ate the forbidden fruit and therefore "perceived" the knowledge of good and evil from the tree of life.

"Good Friday" (April 20, 1862)\(^{48}\) contains a scene where "the Sun and Moon/[Which] hid their face in a starless sky" at the sight of the Crucifixion of Christ to redeem the sins of the world (ll. 9-10).\(^{49}\) In an earlier poem written on June 15, 1851,\(^{50}\) "The Three Enemies," Rossetti explores Christ's forbearance as he was tortured on the cross, the cup of worldly temptation which the devil entices Christ with, and

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the concept of human perception in the lines "Lord Jesus, cover up mine eyes/Lest they should look on vanities" (ll. 39-40). Even in this early poem, Rossetti is contemplating ideas expanded upon in the characterization of Lizzie in "Goblin Market" which influences her later poetry and prose.

In *Seek and Find*, Christina Rossetti refers to the Gospel of St. Matthew in which it is stated that the pearl is a symbol for the treasures of heaven. A similar statement is in "I will lift up mine Eyes unto the Hills" (l. 7). Laura exchanges a "tear more rare than pearl" for the goblin wares (l. 127). In this manner, Laura symbolically gives up her heavenly inheritance. In essence, Laura denies Christ and the cock crows (l. 200). At the end of the poem, after Lizzie's ability to typologically interpret the world has saved Laura's life, we see a reborn Laura who now has the same gift of interpretive "sight." Sisterhood embodies the education of fellow women so that they may have the ability of the "reading" or "seeing" their place in the cycle of creation.

"Goblin Market" is about the redemption of a fallen woman. Christina Rossetti's social work with fallen women at St. Mary Magdalene's Home for Fallen Women on Highgate Hill from 1860 to 1870 demonstrated for Rossetti the theme of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poem "Aurora Leigh," the redeeming power of the faithful woman and her direct parallel with Christ, as she relates to the lives of Victorian women who are "fallen" in some way. Kristine O'Rearson relates that
there was a double standard concerning sexual behavior in Victorian society. "Women were considered to be the repositories of morality in Victorian England." Men had little moral restriction on their sexual behavior. The Victorians did not try to reform the men in society who brought about the soiled reputation of these women. Instead, reformers concentrated on saving the fallen woman's soul after the fact.

These women, in Victorian society, are banned from conventional domestic life, tending to a husband and raising children, since their moral fiber could not be trusted. The fallen woman is seen in Christina Rossetti's poetry as "a victim of man's betrayal, society's strict conventions, and her own naivete...the poet redeems these young women by placing the bulk of the blame on the unfeeling male partners...by challenging the dichotomy of fallen and unfallen, and by considering the women's motivation of love as taking sexuality to a spiritual dimension."

Like Eve in Genesis and Laura in "Goblin Market," fallen women are outcasts of society, but their fallen states come from the male deceivers or tricksters (Satan, the goblin men) and from the weakness in the female nature which allows them to trust these men. Trusting men with the knowledge of the woman's thoughts makes the woman vulnerable to temptation. Thus, the goblin men trick Laura with "voice of doves/Cooing all together:/They sounded kind and full of loves..." (ll. 77-
Laura realizes that the goblin men have used her gullibility against her, duped her and then rejected her. Milton's Adam in *Paradise Lost* can be viewed as the actual cause of the fall, because there are numerous references in Books V, VIII, and IX to Adam's unquenchable desire for knowledge and ascension to a higher plane in the hierarchy. This tendency in Adam is paralleled with Satan's rebellion in Milton's work and with the desires of the goblin men in Rossetti's "Goblin Market." This desire to abandon the earthly and reach Paradise now is the catalyst for the fall, not Eve's misstep as in Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

Laura and Lizzie are described as being two halves of a whole; the fallen and unfallen status cannot be distinguished. Women are sexual tokens of exchange in a patriarchal society; both fallen and unfallen women are victims of marriage according to Victorian standards. In the eyes of God, all of these women are the daughters of Eve. In Rossetti's poem "Helen Grey," a woman with Eve-like narcissism "is enraptured by her own beauty but she is betrayed by the material world which ages her and takes away the physical prowess she once possessed."62

Like Laura in "Goblin Market," Helen Grey is a reflection of Christina Rossetti's adherence to Tractarian tenets, that the material world is vanity from which only death comes. The eternal life comes from communion with Christ. Laura sucks the fruit of temptation of the goblin men but later is
redeemed when she partakes in a ritualistic eucharist as she consumes the fruit of innocence from the body of Lizzie, a direct parallel to the eucharistic sacrament of drinking the wine and eating the bread as the body and blood of Christ which redeems the sinner. "Rossetti paints Laura as a Christ-like savior in her rescue of her sister as Lizzie has to suck the juices off of Laura just as Jesus' brethren eat his body and drink his blood to be saved after he sacrificed himself on the cross.""Nay, take a seat with us,/Honour and eat with us" (l. 368-9) the goblin men say to try and tempt Lizzie in a twisted kind of Last Supper scene.

When Lizzie returns from this temptation, she tells Laura to "Hug me, kiss, me, suck my juices...eat me, drink me, love me" (ll. 468 and 471). The reference to the oral orifice in "Goblin Market" is also related to female, circular orifices which represent female nothingness. Laura tries to fill the hollowness with the wares of the goblin men. This void can only be filled by belief in Christ's redemptive powers, just as the juices from Lizzie's body restore Laura. This is a connection made by Christina Rossetti between her belief in the redemption of Eve's fall, the redemption of sisterhood, and the redemption of Christ through Tractarian faith.

The sensuality in "Goblin Market" takes on a sense of matrimonial union with Christ, much like taking on the vows of the Anglican sisterhood. God loves even the fallen, fouled
Lizzie becomes symbolic of Mary, the Virgin mother of Christ, who is the example of Christian sexuality purged of sin by carrying God's essence inside her body. Lizzie carries "the body of Christ" on the outside of her body in the form of the fruit of the goblin men as "sacramental communion." By bearing God inside her body, the Virgin Mary receives redemption. Lizzie and Laura receive redemption in much the same way in "Goblin Market." "Christ is the sustenance for the soul devoid of love." Christ's brides Laura and Lizzie are not devoured by His appetites like a human lover would consume them, represented by the goblin men's effect on Laura and by their attempts to consume Lizzie. Instead, Laura and Lizzie absorb Christ's love through interacting in sisterhood and their souls expand.

Joan Webber explains that Milton's Eve and Adam are described as beings who will eventually reach the status of Angels in heaven to become one with God without suffering death. This is the natural tendency to ascend in the hierarchy for the inhabitants of Eden explained to Adam by Raphael in Books VI-VIII of Paradise Lost. Obedient, patient love of God, in a passive state of waiting is the key. Adam realizes heaven contains better rewards than Eden. This process of ascension is destroyed by the pre-ordained fall. Christina Rossetti would take this one step further, following her Tractarian beliefs, and say that once expelled from Eden, Eve and Adam must attain grace, the status of Angels in
Heaven, in a different manner, not through ascension in the hierarchy but by emulating the sufferings of Christ on earth including human death. "Goblin Market" is a poem about a trial of faith in God which allows Laura and Lizzie to perceive new truths with a greater sense of God's presence in the world.73

There is a power in female love that unites the female sisterhood as presented in "Goblin Market." Fallen women are depicted unfavorably by Rossetti in her poems if they betray other women or place emphasis on earthly versus spiritual love.74 This sisterhood network is Rossetti's presentation of the connection between all women as the daughters of Eve, who share in the misery of mankind expelled from Eden. This sisterhood is connected to the Oxford Movement's discourse concerning "women's mission to women" which accounts for, on one level, Lizzie's sacrifice for her sister, Laura.75 Through the "shared fall" of Laura and Lizzie, through the "transgression of the rule of difference," "sisterhood becomes a match for brotherhood" and the goblin men are beaten.76 The goblin men in the poem are a brotherhood set in counterpoint to the bond between sisters.

Victorian wives often had their innocence crushed by unfaithful husbands just as a fallen, unmarried woman was deceived by a man, as is depicted in Rossetti's poems "Maude Clare" and "Light Love." In Genesis, Adam can be seen as a kind of "unfaithful" husband, one who betrayed his wife, Eve,
by not guiding her strictly in the ways of righteousness as God told him to do. Eve's role as the mother of mankind gives her importance in the fall and also in the redemption of the human race. The redeemed fallen woman had an immense power feared by the patriarchy. This power is expressed at the end of "Goblin Market" where Laura and Lizzie discover that there is no one like a sister, where they build their own matriarchal world devoid of men, goblin or otherwise. Lizzie in "Goblin Market" risks rape and death to redeem her sister.

"On the doors of the Baptistery in Florence, Ghiberti has sculpted Eve and Mary. He sees them, beautifully, as twins. Arms entwined, they ascend, together, into heaven. What this tells us is that sinlessness and imperfection are braided... Without this knowledge of good and evil, genetically transmitted by Eve, we should not desire to know and to love God; we should have no need of Him." This is a perfect synopsis of Rossetti's depiction of Eve and Mary, symbolically portrayed in her characters Laura and Lizzie in "Goblin Market." The sculpture of Eve and Mary, "arms entwined" is reminiscent of these lines describing Laura and Lizzie from "Goblin Market": "Golden head by golden head,/Like two pigeons in one nest/Folded in each other's wings,/They lay down in their curtained bed:" (ll. 184-7). The description of "golden-haired" Laura and Lizzie and the comparison of Lizzie to Mary, the lily, from "Goblin Market" also appear in the section "As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news
from a far country" of a later poem of Rossetti's from 1886 entitled from "New Jerusalem and Its Citizens." The images of the rose, crown, and penitent which tie Eve to Mary and Christ also appear in this poem.

In "The Iniquity of the Fathers Upon the Children," Rossetti uses the phrase "equal before God" which suggests that the fallen woman could redeem her own purity and reach her place in heaven by devoting the rest of her earthly time to expressing God's spiritual love. Her reward will be an equalness in God's eyes she did not experience in the earthly patriarchal system. Christian love will heal all sins.

Antony Harrison states that although women in the Victorian period were subordinate, Christina Rossetti believed women would receive their justice in heaven, where they would be viewed as equal to men. "Part of the comfort she (Christina Rossetti) finds in religion is the promise that, in the soul's relation to Christ, gender, finally, does not matter."

It is true that Christina Rossetti opposed the feminist movement in the 1880's and was not in favor of women's suffrage. Her conservatism would not allow her to breach those rules. "Goblin Market" is not a blow for women's rights but a religious shrine for the author. Rossetti was a conventional Victorian; the fallen women in her poetry do not achieve happiness unless they are spiritually redeemed. These women act out of love, not out of desire, and sexuality takes on a spiritual dimension for them separate from the sexuality
associated with men. Sex is linked through Eve to God's love and commitment to women, fallen and unfallen, in Rossetti's poetic and prose works. This is an arena men can not enter. Women's motives in love are pure and unselfish, a Christian virtue. Sex for men is tied to earthly vanities, the economic system of using women for bartering. Women's bodies, like the fruit, can be bought and sold in "Goblin Market." "Light Love" and "Cousin Kate" also reveal examples of this. Rossetti considers this to be a flaw, a weakness in men's character as in the poems "Sister Maude" and "Maude Clare."

The men who wrote the Bible and men like Milton who interpreted it in Paradise Lost knew the power of writing in a patriarchal society. For Christina Rossetti, "Goblin Market" was a germinating seed, showing her the power of the female writer's voice. Angela Leighton links the image of the fallen woman with the power of creativity in female poets when she writes

The figure of the fallen woman is also, however, a sign for women of the power of writing. Her wandering, outcast state seductively expresses the poet's restlessness and desire. To summon her is not only to assert a political purpose which breaks the moral law, but also to claim the power of writing as necessarily free of control, or rule. The fallen woman is the muse, the beloved--the lost sister, mother,
daughter, whose self was one's own. In poetry, above all, the social gesture of reclamation and solidarity becomes also an imaginative gesture of integration and identity.

The link between the power of the fallen woman and the power of the female poet is echoed in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh*. In many of Rossetti's poems, the fallen woman's voice, like the power of Laura in "Goblin Market," is restored to her (if only within the confines of the text), that voice which was silenced by patriarchal prohibitions. All of the fallen women in Rossetti's poems are survivors, and therefore transcend their "fallen" state by gaining strength from the abandonment in their lives.

The battle between the earthly and eternal was never far from Christina Rossetti's consciousness. "Goblin Market" is a blend of Pre-Raphaelite imagery and Tractarian beliefs. Thomas Woolner, a member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood wrote a poem titled "Of My Lady. In Death" published in *The Germ* in January of 1850 in which the lady submits "to the lover's ardors." The lady's beauty then "Sank, sharpened with disease." Three lines later, the lady dies. Another one of Woolner's poems, "My Beautiful Lady" is placed in an Edenic setting in which a fall from morality takes place. These were common themes in Pre-Raphaelite poetry and painting.

Christina Rossetti was familiar with Woolner's work and uses it as inspiration for her tale of a woman who nearly
destroys herself, physically and spiritually, by giving in to
temptation in "Goblin Market." It is also apparent that the
description of Lizzie, resistant to the goblin men's
temptation, has the illuminative quality of the Pre-Raphaelite
paintings. The qualities of humility and chastity, prevalent
in medieval iconography, are portrayed by Lizzie. The
Ruskinian notion of Typical and Abstract Beauty are compared
in "Goblin Market." "The energy, freedom and easy control of
the fluent irregular meter [in 'Goblin Market'] reflect
Rossetti's triumphant appropriation of Pre-Raphaelite
materials for her own purpose."^2

The themes of Tractarianism in "Goblin Market" include
baptism, communion, virginity, obedience, penitence, social
reform, sacrifice, and self-denial. The Christ-like events
of temptation, suffering, and redemption, which were believed
by the Tractarians to be the path to grace, are part of the
poem. Lizzie has a sense of moral rules; she tries to teach
these to Laura but to no avail. This sense of following
order, a Tractarian tenet, is what saves Lizzie and Laura from
temptation. Laura, like Eve in Genesis, eats the forbidden
fruit that brings about destruction. "Goblin Market" is read
by Georgina Battiscombe as a parable connected to the story of
Eve. "Here is the forbidden fruit, whose taste in the end
brings death, and here is salvation brought by someone who
loves, and deliberately chooses to risk and to suffer. The
theme of Eve recurs often in Christina's poetry."^6
There are many other allusions to Tractarian tenets in "Goblin Market." Laura in "Goblin Market" is "baptized" anew by Lizzie and her "fruit," and Laura rejects the world of vanity, the world of Satan, and accepts her place in the world to come. Therefore, Christ's redemption becomes the superior form of sensuality. This is also true in the poem "A Bruised Reed Shall He Not Break": "I will accept thy will to do and be, /Thy hatred and intolerance of sin,/Thy will at least to love, that burns within/And thirsteth after Me: So will I render fruitful, blessing still,/The germs and small beginnings in thy heart,/Because thy will cleaves to the better part..." (ll. 1-7). This poem reflects the love of Christ which is a burning desire like the desire for the goblin fruit in "Goblin Market" except that the goblin fruit is the vanity of worldly temptation and Lizzie's self-sacrifice, like Christ's, is the "fruitful" desire of eternal love.

Creativity, through the birth of children or the birth of poetry, are the "germs" that are "the better part" of God's will in "A Bruised Reed Shall He Not Break." In the sonnet "The World," the temptations of the material world like the goblin fruit in "Goblin Market" satiate the speaker. Unfortunately, the world, unlike God, is a false truth; the world is "loathsome and foul with hideous leprosy/and subtle serpents gliding in her hair" (ll. 3-4). Christina Rossetti voices this concern in her prose work The Face of the Deep
when she comments that evil really lies within herself.\textsuperscript{100}

Lizzie is the side in all women who lives the ascetic life of Tractarian beliefs, who is forebearant and can withstand temptation. She conquers the sight, the sensations of worldly vanities. Lizzie's actions are an act of defiance, the kind of quiet defiance exhibited often in Christina Rossetti's life. Lizzie redeems "the fall" in "Goblin Market" and is associated with Mary's virtue and Christ's redemptive potential. Christ also had his own encounter with "merchant men" in the Bible. "Goblin Market" is not only post-lapsarian but also post-incarnational.\textsuperscript{101}

John Keble's Tractarian definition of "symbolic sense" as one of the moral senses explains the importance of symbolism in "Goblin Market."\textsuperscript{102} The use of fruit connotes sexual temptation, the fall of mankind, the fall of nature. "Evil can assail us through our sense of beauty."\textsuperscript{103} The overwhelming list of fruits inculcates the senses with the material world\textsuperscript{104} in "Goblin Market" in much the same way that Milton catalogues the description of the natural beauty, the "fruits" of Eden in Book IV of \textit{Paradise Lost}. In "One Certainty," Rossetti warns against believing too much in what the senses tell us.\textsuperscript{105} Laura abandons the Christian symbol of the "living vine" for the fruit of death.

Rossetti said that a strict allegorical reading of "Goblin Market" was inaccurate.\textsuperscript{106} In this way, "Goblin Market" should be viewed as only reflective of John Keble's
definition of symbolic sense as moral sense. "Goblin Market" is the story of the fall of the original sin but also reflective of the Christian "sacramental aesthetic" which binds all women to God. This binary interpretation of "Goblin Market" that the daughters of Eve contribute to the fall and to the redemption of mankind, also ameliorates Christina Rossetti's life-long struggle with the poisoning and healing influences of nature. The two sisters in "Goblin Market" "simultaneously represent positions of transgression, victimization, and redemption" just as the mother of mankind and her descendant Christ represent these same attitudes. Lizzie configures woman as part of the redemptive process which is one of the ways Rossetti envisions Tractarian epistemology.

Laura compares the voices of the goblin men to the sound of doves, the Christian symbol of the Holy Spirit, giving the goblin men a spiritual dimension that they do not possess. "The apple is the first fruit mentioned in the descriptions of the goblin wares." The goblin men's apples hold only empty promises, just like the apple from the tree of knowledge of Good and Evil in Eden. If the consumer of the fruit does not bring the concept of woman's place in the creation cycle (the relationship between women and Christ) to the interpretation of the symbols in the material world, then the flora and fauna of the sensory world are full of emptiness and death. This is the theme in Rossetti's poems "Sweet
Death" and "The World" as well as "Goblin Market." Lizzie is compared to "a lily in a flood" (l. 409). This flower is a Christian symbol; it is the emblem of Christ and of his mother, the Virgin Mary. This emphasizes the parallel between Lizzie's sacrifice for Laura and the sacrifices of Mary and Christ for the world. The lily is also the flower of Easter, of rebirth in Christ. Laura wears a crown of leaves and nuts woven for her by the goblin men (ll. 99-100). This is a hollow parody of Christ's crown of thorns, the symbol of self-less suffering. However, Lizzie is the one who truly suffers.

In *Seek And Find*, Christina Rossetti explains that "good" and "evil" are defined by how you view the iconography of the world. Right interpretation of the world must be followed up by moral action. This was Laura and Eve's mistake; they were unable to interpret the signs of evil and make judicious choices. A woman who "sees" her place in the destructive but ultimately redemptive birth cycle of mankind can interpret nature morally. Lizzie, in contrast, is the perfect example of Dantian philosophy who is exacting in her ability to interpret symbolically, analogically, and morally the objects in the material world. The story she relates concerning the fate of Jeanie is a perfect example of Lizzie's ability to express and interpret symbolism analogically and morally.

"Goblin Market" is therefore a work that searches for the
meaning of religious and worldly experience which is exactly what Milton does in *Paradise Lost* but from a completely different viewpoint. Christina Rossetti's devotional poetry repeats an "analogic reading of nature which is revealed to depend on the Incarnation as the source of the ongoing presence of spiritual and moral meaning in the created material world." This is the viewpoint of Dante Alighieri, not Milton. The natural world conveys spiritual truth due to the Incarnation (Christ on the Cross and risen from the tomb). Nature is not the center of evil and mankind's doom (the tree of knowledge of good and evil and its fruit eaten by Satan, Adam and Eve) which Milton describes. According to Tractarian doctrine, nature only becomes dangerous if one becomes pre-occupied with its empty sensuality. The seasonal changes in nature represent man's inevitable death but also man's rebirth in heaven. Rossetti often depicts death as a death in nature and configures man's rebirth in a beautiful garden as the picture of heaven in her poetry.\(^1\)

*Paradise Lost* is a source for "Goblin Market," but Christina Rossetti revises Milton's epic poem using her own ideology. John Milton refers to Death as a "goblin" in Book II, line 688 of *Paradise Lost*, but Rossetti's goblin men bring about a "spiritual" as well as physical death.\(^2\) When Milton describes the fruit in the Garden of Eden, specifically of the Tree of Life, in Book IV, lines 145-52, 215-23, and

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420-55, his description takes the form of a catalogue or list of a corporate hierarchy. On the other hand, Christina Rossetti's description of the fruit in "Goblin Market" is lush, sensual, and cyclic rather than linear in form. *Paradise Lost*, Book IV, ll. 452 and 476, refer to the linear development of God's hierarchy and Milton's version of Genesis; Rossetti's poetry is always cyclic, never linear. The sensuality of the fruit in Milton's work and in "Goblin Market" is the desire that Eve (in Book V) and Laura (l. 130-7) cannot forebear. "Gorged on bitterness" from "Goblin Market" is similar to Milton's line about Eve, where she "greedily engorg'ed" the apple from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Many lines from "Goblin Market" echo imagery from Genesis, like "Her tree of life drooped from the root" (l. 260). Eve's dream of temptation by the serpent in Book V, lines 82-93, has much of the imagery of the temptation of Laura in Rossetti's poem.

The opening description of the goblin's wares and the changing seasons in "Goblin Market" resembles Milton's description of Eden in *Paradise Lost*: "And higher then that Wall a circling row/of goodliest Trees loaden with fairest Fruit,/Blossoms and Fruit at once of golden hue/appeerd, with gay enameld colours mixt" (Book IV, ll. 146-9). The explanation of the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge (Book IV, ll. 216-22) is close to the imagery presented in "Goblin Market." The descriptive catalogue of the goblin men
in "Goblin Market" sounds very much like the description of the fallen angels in *Paradise Lost*. The description of Laura, the comparison of her to "a lily from the beck" (1. 83)\textsuperscript{125} is similar to Milton's description of Eve, down to the comparison of Eve to the "lily," the Virgin Mary. The explanation of the "flowing Gold of [Eve's] loose tresses" is like Rossetti's description of Laura by the goblins: "golden curl" and "golden lock" (ll.126-7). Laura and Lizzie are "impardis't in one another's arms/The happier Eden" just like Eve and Adam. The difference here is that Adam is unable to save Eve from the fall in Genesis and in *Paradise Lost*.

In Rossetti's world, Laura is redeemed by sisterhood, a symbol of the birth of Christ brought about by the Virgin Mary, which ultimately redeems the fall. The consumption of the "forbidden fruit" in both poems is described in sensual terms. The fall is caused in Milton's poem by disobedience through the loss of "right reason"; in contrast, in Rossetti's poem, the fall is the consequence of succumbing to the sensual temptations of the world of vanity. After Laura eats the goblin fruit, she ages and is near death just the way Eve will suffer east of Eden when she is banished from paradise, explained in Milton's poem in Book XI, ll. 531-45.\textsuperscript{126} "Sweeter than honey from the rock,/Stronger than man-rejoicing wine" (ll. 129-30)\textsuperscript{127} is Rossetti's delineation in "Goblin Market" of the difference between the support of the church as an institution and the nourishment of the soul received from
partaking in the sacraments, which is part of living the 
suffering of Christ to gain grace in Tractarian doctrine.

The loss of innocence and therefore the gaining of 
knowledge makes the world infertile in Milton and in 
Rossetti's poem. The coming of Christ into Rossetti's world 
is the redemption of creation, of fertility in the creation 
cycle. Raphael, sent as a messenger to Adam by God, hails Eve 
in the same way that others will hail the "second Eve" Mary in 
later Biblical history. The lineage of Mary and Christ is 
discussed by Milton in Book V, line 388-390. The 
sisterhood of Eve and Mary, Laura and Lizzie restores 
innocence. The word of "the fruit of thy [Mary's] womb, 
Jesus" is muted for those who have fallen away from the faith 
just as Laura is deafened to the sound of the goblins once she 
has eaten the forbidden fruit.

In this way, Rossetti's Christ, the "light of the world," 
is hidden just as in Genesis. This element does not exist in 
Milton's work. Eve's fall from grace, like Laura's fall, is 
necessary so that Mary can create "the body and blood" of 
Christ, an important part of the redemption, just as Lizzie 
plays her part in the inverted "Last Supper" where she 
sacrifices herself for Laura in "Goblin Market." The 
temptation of Lizzie by the goblin men is reminiscent of the 
temptation of Christ by Satan in Milton's Paradise Regained. 
The vanishing or dispersal of the goblin men by Lizzie's 
selfless act is similar to the sinking of the fallen angels
into hell in *Paradise Lost*. Christina Rossetti's focus on redemption of the fall in "Goblin Market" is another area where she found Milton's work lacking.

Christina Rossetti's poems and prose about Eve in her later life are the culmination of years of thought and work on the subjects of sisterhood and female nothingness mixed with personal experience and Tractarian and Pre-Raphaelite tenets. These aspects to her life are like the "chain of living links not made nor riven;/It stretched sheer up through lightning, wind and storm,/And anchored fast in heaven" (ll. 138-40)\(^{129}\) in the poem "From House of Home" which form the sustaining structure of Rossetti's Eve poetry at the end of her poetic career.

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NOTES FROM CHAPTER 4
PAGES 67-76


4. Rossetti 318.

5. Crump 51.


8. Crump 82.


12. Ibid. xviii.


15. Marsh 45.

16. Ibid. 60.

17. LoTempio 92.


25. LoTempio 86.


27. Marsh 42.


30. Smith 30.
36. Garlick 114.
38. Crump 122.
40. Rossetti 149.
42. Rossetti 193.
43. Crump II 266.
44. Rossetti 103.
49. Crump I 187.
50. William Rossetti 147.
51. Crump I 71.
53. Crump II 271.
55. Ibid. 16.
NOTES FROM CHAPTER 4
PAGES 81-88


58. O'Reardon 9.
59. Ibid. 2.
60. Ibid. 4.


63. O'Reardon 47.
64. Crump 20.
65. Ibid. 23.


67. LoTempio 122.
68. Ibid. 127.
69. Ibid. 144.
70. LoTempio 145.


73. LoTempio 111.
74. O'Reardon 46.


77. O'Reardon 32.

79. Crump 16.

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82. O'Reardon 53.
86. O'Reardon 43.
89. O'Reardon 34.
91. Garlick 110.
96. Battiscombe 31.
99. Crump 76.
NOTES FROM CHAPTER 4
PAGES 93-98


102. Arseneau 203.


104. Arseneau 207.


108. Arseneau 208.

109. Ibid.

110. Ibid. 209.


115. Scheinberg 211.

116. Ibid. 221.


118. Arseneau 199.

119. Ibid. 226.


129. Crump 86.
Christina Rossetti's later poems and prose works (1860-1894) reflect an evolution of the character of Eve that had its beginnings in her earlier poetry and in the poem "Goblin Market." After pursuing the characterization of Eve through the personae of Laura in "Goblin Market," Christina Rossetti began to relate the life of the fallen woman, Eve, more personally to herself and to other Victorian women in her later poetry.

Eve's fall brought pain and death into the world. The silence of death is sweet but the pain of life is not; this is the key aspect to the poem "Life and Death" (April 1863)\(^1\) which examines the Pre-Raphaelite view of nature reflecting heavenly transcendence as well as life's transience. A poem which expands upon these themes is "Bird or Beast?" In this poem from August of 1864,\(^2\) Rossetti indicates, using a simplicity of tone and language admired by the Tractarians, that the presence of the "dove" and "lamb" in Eden were a warning from God concerning respect and obedience (important Tractarian tenets) after the fall.
Did any bird come flying
   After Adam and Eve,
When the door was shut against them
   And they sat down to grieve?

I think not Eve's peacock
   Splendid to see,
And I think not Adams' eagle;
   But a dove may be.

Did any beast come pushing
   Thro' the thorny hedge
Into the thorny thistly world
   Out from Eden's edge?

I think not a lion
   Tho' his strength is such;
But an innocent loving lamb
   May have done as much.

If the dove preached from her bough
   And the lamb from his sod,
The lamb and the dove
   Were preachers sent from God.3

"Eve's peacock" with its feathers of many "eyes" is Rossetti's representation of the omniscience of God's presence and the
vanity of the world that women must shield their eyes from if they expect to avoid a fall like Eve's. The eyes also represent the lost world of Eden and the new world of suffering. The lamb and dove represent Christ and the Holy Spirit, respectively, in Christian iconography. This poem reveals the use of nature as a go-between for man and God. Another example of nature's role as ambassador for man is found in the image of the "True Vine" which is associated to sensuality and birth in the first stanza of the poem "I Know You Not" (1864). It is symbolically connected to the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden: "O Christ, the Vine with living Fruit,/The Twelvefold-fruited Tree of Life,/The Balm in Gilead after strife,/The Valley-lily and the Rose" (ll. 1-4). The images of the "twelvefold-fruited tree" as well as the "lily" and the "rose" appear over and over again as connections between Eve, Christ, Mary, and the sisterhood in Rossetti's "Eve" poetry.

The importance of sisterhood is expressed through the strength of creation in Rossetti's poetry. Sisterhood also fills the void in female life caused by the fall; this concept figures prominently in many of Rossetti's works. A woman's heart is related to a "stone" and to the "word" in the poem "What Would I Give?" written in 1864:

What would I give for a heart of flesh to warm me through, Instead of this heart of stone ice-cold whatever I do;
Hard and cold and small, of all hearts the worst of all.

What would I give for words, if only words would come;
But now in its misery my spirit has fallen dumb:
Oh, merry friends, go your way, I have never a word to say.

What would I give for tears, not smiles but scalding tears,
To wash the black mark clean, and to thaw the frost of years,
To wash the stain ingrain and to make me clean again.⁷

This poem, like "A Birthday," relates the heart of a woman,
paralleled with the heartfelt guilt of Eve in the poem "Eve,"
to the "sacred heart" of Christ. "The black mark" or "stain"
is the original sin, the fallen status of woman that can be
washed clean by Christ's redemption. Human words are
deficient in the place of the word of God, which fills the
void of female nothingness left as a legacy to all women by
Eve's fall.

Another kind of nothingness, the emptiness of vanity, is
the central theme in "Beauty is Vain" (1864).⁸ This poem also
is concerned with the presence of death, that "shadow" which
always walks with the living.

While roses are so red,
While lilies are so white
Shall a woman exalt her face
Because it gives delight?
She's not so sweet as a rose,
A lily's straighter than she,
And if she were as red or white
She'd be but one of three.

Whether she flush in love's summer
Or in its winter grow pale,
Whether she flaunt her beauty
Or hide it away in a veil,
Be she red or white,
And stand she erect or bowed,
Time will win the race he runs with her
And hide her away in a shroud.

This poem reveals the vanity of beauty, the beauty of Dante's Beatrice or the loveliness of Eve as she spies her image in the pool in the garden of Eden, described in Milton's Paradise Lost (Book IV, ll. 455-80). Female beauty is part of the vanity of the world that the Tractarians were ever-conscious of. The lily representing Christ's mother Mary and virginity which is lost in "love's summer" is related to birth and death, beauty and aging in this poem.

The healing power of Christ which overcomes life's vanities and man's betrayal is once more echoed in "Twice." In stanzas four, five, and six of this poem written in 1864, Christina Rossetti symbolically expresses Eve's betrayal by
Adam and the rejuvenation of her love by God where all fallen women's hearts, broken by man, are healed by God.

I take my heart in my hand,
    O my God, O my God,
My broken heart in my hand:
    Thou hast seen, judge Thou.
My hope was written on sand,
    O my God, O my God.
Now let Thy Judgement stand--
    Yea, judge me now.

This contemned of a man,
    This marred one heedless day,
This heart take Thou to scan
    Both within and without:
Refine with fire it gold,
    Purge Thou its dross away--
Yea hold it in Thy hold,
    Whence none can pluck it out.

I take my heart in my hand--
    I shall not die, but live--
Before Thy face I stand;
    I, for Thou callest such:
All that I have I bring,
    All that I am I give,
Smile Thou and I shall sing,
But shall not question much.¹²

"Although Rossetti considers the married and the
unmarried life to be in 'gracious harmony,' she sees the life
of the married woman, especially her spiritual life, as much
less satisfying than that of the unmarried woman, for the wife
must approach God indirectly through her husband."¹³ A wife's
duty might bring pain and difficulty; therefore, it was safer
and better to remain a daughter rather than to become a
wife.¹⁴ In Letter and Spirit (1883) and in Face of the Deep
(1892),¹⁵ Rossetti makes it clear that in Genesis after the
fall, Adam sins when he tries to shelter himself from God's
wrath at the expense of Eve. Because of this, it is better
for women to trust in God and not in men. Rossetti's concern
about the relationship of woman to the world and to God is
reflected in the poem "Twice" in the use of "O my love' and "O
my God" and in the frequent use of "I" which relates to the
"eye" as the window to the soul.

Another similar repetition is "O my soul" in "Shall I
Forget?" from February of 1865.¹⁶ Female nothingness is also
related in this poem to God's promise of "nothing" -- that if,
as the Tractarians believed, a Christian woman was forebearant
and lived a life that paralleled Christ's suffering, she would
be rewarded with the "peace of Paradise."

Shall I forget on this side of the grave?
I promise nothing: you must wait and see
Patient and brave.
(O my soul, watch with him and he with me.)

Shall I forget in peace of Paradise?
I promise nothing: follow, friend, and see
Faithful and wise.
(O my soul, lead the way he walks with me.)

Christina Rossetti's identified with Eve's loss of innocence. Through the fall, Eve brought not only pain and death to the world but a sense of isolation for all women. The blood of Christ is related to rebirth and the blood of passion and birth in Rossetti's poem "Despised and Rejected." These concepts are also evident in the poem "If Only" and in many of her other poems from 1860 until Rossetti's death.

The Tractarian concepts of human isolation, faith in the afterlife, and nature's cycle as a testament to the immutability of heaven are apparent in the sonnet "If Only" composed in February of 1865:

If I might only love my God and die!
But now he bids me love Him and live on,
Now when the bloom of all my life is gone,
The pleasant half of life has quite gone by.
My tree of hope is lopped that spread so high;
And I forget how Summer glowed and shone,
While Autumn grips me with its fingers wan,
And frets me with its fitful windy sigh.
When Autumn passes then must Winter numb,
And Winter may not pass a weary while,
But when it passes Spring shall flower again:
And in that Spring who weepeth now shall smile,
Yea, they shall wax who now are on the wane,
Yea, they shall sing for love when Christ shall come.

Christina Rossetti pictured herself and all Victorian women as "A Daughter of Eve" (September 1865):

A fool I was to sleep at noon,
And wake when night is chilly
Beneath the comfortless cold moon;
A fool to pluck my rose too soon,
A fool to snap my lily.

My garden-plot I have not kept;
Faded and all-forsaken,
I weep as I have never wept:
Oh it was summer when I slept,
It's winter now I waken

Talk what you please of future Spring
And sun-warmed sweet tomorrow:--
Stripped bare of hope and everything,
No more to laugh no more to sing,
I sit alone with sorrow.

Rossetti pictured Eve in her poems "Eve" and in "Bird or
Beast?" weeping "alone with sorrow." Tears appear in "Goblin Market" as a symbol of heaven's grace. Tears in medieval literature often are a sign of baptism or forgiveness or a manifestation of Christ's love and sacrifice for mankind. This is paralleled in "A Daughter of Eve," in "If Only," and in Christina Rossetti's personal situation as she grows older. This is the fate of all daughters of Eve, especially the fallen ones, who were "A fool to pluck [the] rose to soon,/A fool to snap [the] lily" (ll. 4, 5). The untended garden of Eden mentioned in "Eve" and in "Balm in Gilead" is also referred to in "Daughter of Eve." The garden of Eden is a metaphor for the fallen status of womankind that can be redeemed by involvement in creation, either artistic or procreative. Heaven's garden is also related to Christ's mother and to female sexuality in many pieces of medieval literature. Contributing to the creation/redemption cycle will bring the redeemed woman to the heavenly paradise of Christ's love.

In "An 'Immurata' Sister," written in 1865, Rossetti states in stanza two that "Men work and think, but women/feel" (l. 5). In this same stanza, she indicates that "And so (for I'm a woman, I)/And so I should be glad to die" (l. 6 and 7). In stanza three of "An 'Immurata' Sister," the author reveals that

Hearts that die, by death renew
their youth,
Lightened of this life that doubts and dies;
Silent and contented, while the Truth
Unveiled makes them wise.\textsuperscript{27}

These references explore the "pregnant" silence of heaven's peace, not like the silence of the Victorian woman on earth. Since it is the woman's role to feel as Eve does in Rossetti's poem "Eve," a woman will be finally free of her fallen status, of her oppressed state in the patriarchy, in heaven's silences.

Christina Rossetti "defined herself in terms of a divine relationship that was begun in God, sustained by God, and in the end would live eternally with God."\textsuperscript{28} The field of flowers with its hidden terrors in Rossetti's "Amor Mundi" (1865)\textsuperscript{29} is a good example of the Tractarian belief that Nature is a link between mankind and the divine, that the material world constantly tested one's faith in God. "'Oh what is that glides quickly where velvet flowers grow thickly,/ Their scent comes rich and sickly?'--'A scaled and hooded worm!'" (ll. 13-6).\textsuperscript{30} This "worm" not only represents death brought about by Eve's fall from grace but also Satan and the goblin men in "Goblin Market."

Eve's fall was the impetus for the suppressed state of women in the Victorian world. Rossetti believed women should keep to their place in Victorian society even though she did
assert her creative power when she disagreed with her brother Dante Gabriel and she did leave her brother William enough money to pay him back for his twenty years of financial support. "To seek a higher place was to do as Eve had done 'when she postponed obedience to knowledge.'"^31 A later poem that focuses on the same theme is "Golden Silence" written before 1882.\(^32\) However, in this poem, Rossetti now envisions the silence of Eve and the daughters of Eve as only earthbound. In heaven, the Victorian woman would finally find a voice as is apparent in the lines "But whoso reaps the ripened corn/Shall shout in his delight,/While silences vanish away" (11. 13-5).\(^33\) Eve had brought the silence of death into the world, but all women could voice their joy in Christ's love and life everlasting in heaven.

There is silence that saith 'Ah me!'
There is silence that nothing saith;
One the silence of life forlorn,
One the silence of death;
One is, and the other shall be.

One we know and have known for long,
One we know not, but we shall know,
All we who have ever been born;
Even so, be it so,--
There is silence, despite a song.
Sowing day is silent day,
Resting night is a silent night;
But whoso reaps the ripened corn
Shall shout in his delight,
While silences vanish away.34

This poem connects the suffering of life and the "silence" of death. The silences of the world are not like the silences of heaven's rewards. Another poem with a similar message is "De Profundis" written before 1882.35 The transience of this world compared to the eternity of heaven's fulfillment of desire is expressed in the lines "But all my heart is one desire,/And all in vain:/For I am bound with fleshly bands,/Joy, beauty, lie beyond my scope;/I strain my heart, I stretch my hands,/And catch at hope" (ll. 11-6).36 The imagery of the female heart connected to the hearts of Eve and Christ and of hope deferred to the afterlife are present in this and many of her poems.

In Christina Rossetti's notes for her devotional prose work on Genesis, she makes as association between Eve who came from Adam's side and the Church built from the side of Christ. The first sonnet in Later Life written before 1882 reflects Genesis.37 Adam and Eve leave paradise in sonnet 14, and sonnet 15 is a flashback on the fall. The relationship between Eve, Adam, and God is explored in sonnets 14 and 15. In sonnet 15, Rossetti iterates, "Let woman fear to teach and bear to learn,/Remembering the first woman's mistake" (ll. 1
This reflects the relationship between the Eve-like Laura and the Mary-like Lizzie in "Goblin Market." Sonnet 28 is a mirror of the after-life where the dead are "brimful of knowledge they many not impart,/Brimful of love for you and love for me" (ll. 12-4). These lines are juxtaposed to scripture concerning the evil knowledge obtained by consuming the fruit from the forbidden tree versus eating the fruit of Christ's love in repentance. The dead live in the Eden that humanity lost in its fallen state.

In *Letter and Spirit* (1883), Rossetti states

> She sees not face to face, but as it were in a glass darkly. Every thing, and more than all every person, and most of all the one best beloved person, becomes her mirror wherein she beholds Christ and her shrine wherein she serves Him [but] she whose heart is virginal...beholds the King in His beauty; wherefore she forgets by comparison her own people and her father's house. Her Maker is her Husband, endowing her with a name better than of son and of daughters.

The unmarried woman gives all to God. "She contemplates Him and abhors herself in dust and ashes. She contemplates Him, and forgets herself in Him." She is nothingness made strong in God. Christina Rossetti always envisioned Eve's fall as directly parallel with her own redemption. Genesis may have told of Eve's shame but Revelations told of woman's glory.
Milton's *Paradise Lost* speaks of Eve's guilt, but *Paradise Regained* does not reveal the glory of woman. Ultimately, Rossetti reveals in *Face of the Deep* that "she [Eve and all her daughters] will be made equal with men and angels."\(^4^4\)

Rossetti's prose work *Time Flies* from 1885 describes the sentiment of the healing power of Christ's love for the repentant sinner, in this case, Mary Magdalene who was another redeemed, fallen woman:\(^4^5\)

A record of this Saint is a record of love. She ministered to the Lord of her substance, she stood by the Cross, she sat over against the Sepulchre, she sought Christ in the empty grave, and found Him and was found of Him in the contiguous garden.

Yet this is that same Mary Magdalene out of whom aforetime He had cast seven devils.

Nevertheless, the golden cord of love we are contemplating did all along continue unbroken in its chief strand: for before she loved Him, He loved her.\(^4^6\)

The last paragraph of this passage reiterates the importance of the circle that was created by Eve's original fall which connects herself through God to the creation of Christ. Christ in turn redeemed the sins of all fallen souls. As part of the Godhead, however, he also created Eve. Eve's naiveté
is also stressed in *Time Flies* where Satan, the master of "guile" "cajoles" Eve's innocent nature.

In *The Face of the Deep, a Devotional Commentary on the Apocalypse* written in 1892, Christina Rossetti defines the "daughters of Eve":

> We daughters of Eve may beyond her sons be kept humble by that common voice which makes temptation feminine. Woman is a mighty power for good or for evil. She constrains though she cannot compel. Potential for evil, it becomes her to beware and forbear; potential for good, to spend herself and be spent for her brethren.

The reference to forbearance here is reminiscent of the Tractarian tenets of asceticism and sisterhood symbolic in Lizzie's actions in "Goblin Market." The power of women is related here to the fallen angels in Genesis who also had great potential for good or evil. Temptation and redemption are specifically the feminine weakness and strength. These attributes are directly related to the life of Christ, a life of temptation, humility, asceticism, goodness, and redemption.

Eve exhibits one extreme of feminine character...Eve parleyed with a devil...Eve sought knowledge...Eve aimed at self-indulgence...Eve, by disbelief and disobedience, brought sin to the birth...And yet...so (I humbly hope and trust) amongst all saints of all time will stand before the Throne, Eve
the beloved first Mother of us all. Who that has loved and revered her own immediate dear mother, will not echo the hope? To Christina Rossetti, Eve, like herself, was "the disobedient daughter who broke God's law. However, Eve and Christina Rossetti were also creators who redeemed their sins and would hopefully one day "stand before the Throne" in heaven.

In *Face of the Deep*, Christina Rossetti also commented that "Penitence must, on pain of ultimate rejection, recover purity and guilelessness." This is why Eve in Genesis and Laura in "Goblin Market" are saved by Christ's love; they both deeply repented their sins. All fallen women, in Victorian society and in Rossetti's poems like "Margery," "An Apple-Gathering," Cousin Kate," Songs in a Cornfield," and "From sunset to star rise," could be so redeemed.

In the poem "Our Mothers" written before 1893, Christina Rossetti outlines the pain of female nothingness in the world and the joy women find in sisterhood and in paradise. These women tell the living in the poem to "Learn as we learned in life's/sufficient school, Work as we worked in patience of/our rule,/Walk as we walked, much less/by sight than faith,/Hope as we hoped, despite our/slips and scathe,/Fearful in joy and confident in dule" (11.6-15). This is the fate of Eve's daughters after the fall, redeemed after death in the joy of Heaven's Eden: "How looking back to earth/from Paradise/Do tears not gather in those/loving eyes?"
The eyes, which are vacant with the sin of the fall, become "loving" and "happy" when filled with God's redemption.

Rossetti's poem "Go in Peace," written before 1893, reassures the reader of the miracles God's love can do including the cleansing of the fallen status of woman:

Can peach renew lost bloom,
Or violet lost perfume,
Or sullied snow turn white as overnight?
Man cannot compass it, yet never fear:
The leper Naaman
Shows what God will and can;
God Who worked there is working here;
Wherefore let shame, not gloom, betinge thy brow,
God Who worked then is working now.

The Creation/Redemption Cycle

Critic Augustine Birrell in Victorian times stated that "Eve is, I think, more interesting than 'Heaven-born Helen, Sparta's queen,'--I mean in herself, and as a woman to write poetry about." Christina Rossetti agreed with this statement. Eve had been one of the primary role models for women for thousands of years. Seek and Find, Christina Rossetti's prose work published in 1879 by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK), is divided into two sections: "The First Series: Creation" and "The Second Series:
Redemption. Clearly, near the end of Rossetti's life, she was assimilating all her poetic experience about Eve and Eve's part in the origination of creation and redemption in women's religious lives.

"Creation" and "Redemption" are the two most important aspects of woman's relationship to God. God had created woman, woman had been tempted and fell, woman had created the Redeemer, and Christ had restored grace to mankind. Rossetti accepts this aspect of a woman's place in God's kingdom without vanity. In "Ice and Snow," part of "Redemption," Rossetti says, "Let us imitate the practical examples of [the] virtuous woman...and copying her we shall become trustworthy, loving, prudent, diligent...it will do us no harm to recognize...a figure of the Church: that great Mother and Mistress...who because her whole family was washed and beautified in the blood of Christ...has no need to fear" (ll. 223-4). Eve, Mary, and the Church are the "great Mother and Mistress." Rossetti sees woman's position in the patriarchy, social and religious, as a parallel to Christ's. Non-assertiveness and the ability to minister were parts of Victorian female identity and part of Christ's character. Women must learn to obey as Christ was subordinate to God. Women are therefore "the true imitators of Christ" on earth.

Rossetti's poetry is full of allusions to woman's proper role and to the evils of female ego. In Sonnet 14 of Later Life written before 1882, Rossetti states "She [Eve] propped
upon his strength, and he in guise/Of lover tho' of lord, girt
to fulfil/Their term of life and die when God should will" (ll. 5-7). The married woman, like Eve, should be sustained by her husband's "strength" as he is lord in her life. The Tractarians, however, put importance on the celibate life; therefore, religion was the sustaining "strength" in Rossetti's life. Women in Victorian society were considered morally superior to men and were responsible for building the foundation of a moral society. This is reflected in the ending of "Goblin Market" where Laura and Lizzie are at peace in their domestic surroundings with Laura preaching to the children the moral axiom: "For there is no friend like a sister" (l. 562). Lizzie's role in this poem is to save her sister from evil temptation. The superior role of woman as moral teacher in Victorian society is an integral part of female existence, paralleling for the Tractarians the role of Christ as moral instructor. "Religious affiliation is always an inherent part of the poet's construction of self as part of...a larger 'English' community." However, Rossetti also warns women in Later Life, Sonnet 15 of the evil of ego in assuming the role of moral teacher. "Let women fear to teach and bear to learn,/Remembering the first woman's first mistake./Eve has for pupil the inquiring snake,/Whose doubts she answered on a great concern;/But he the tables so contrived to turn" (ll. 1-5). Tractarian humility is emphasized in this poem. Victorian female poets
were attempting to create a voice, to define an identity in the literary world. Rossetti saw the Victorian female religious identity as inseparable from the vision of the mother icon, Eve, as a part of the creation/redemption cycle.

Christina Rossetti explains the significance of the fall in terms of gender by stating in the prose work *Letter and Spirit* that

It is in no degree at variance with the Sacred Record to picture to ourselves Eve, that first and typical woman, [with]...a castle-building spirit...a feminine boldness and directness of aim...Her very virtues may have opened the door to temptation. By birthright gracious and accessible, she lends an ear to all petitions...she never suspects even the serpent. Eve preferred various prospects of God's Will: Adam seems to have preferred one person to God: Eve diverted her "mind" and Adam his "heart' from God Almighty. Both courses led to one common result, that is, to one common ruin (Gen.3). Whatever else may be deduced from the opening chapters of Genesis, their injunction of obedience is plainly written; of unqualified obedience, of obedience on pain of death.67

Feminine imagination and creativity is complimented in this passage. Misuse of imagination and disobedience to God's laws cause the original sin which creates a sense of "hope
deferred" until the afterlife. Rossetti uses this line from Proverbs 13.12 many times in her poetry. Guilt and hope are repeated themes in Rossetti's "Eve" poetry. The following is an excerpt from an Office-hymn for Passion Sunday which Rossetti was acquainted with and makes the connection between the tree of forbidden fruit and Christ's cross:

When [man] fell on death by tasting
Fruit of the forbidden tree
Then another tree was chosen
Which the world from death should free.68

Many of Rossetti's works have a hymn-like quality. There is a purity about Christina Rossetti's feeling of eros and a passion about her attitude toward agape in many of her poems.

Rossetti's works undercut the manmade hierarchies (patriarchal Victorian standards and mores) which hinder mankind from attaining God's grace, the hierarchies which dominate Milton's Paradise Lost. During the reign of Queen Victoria, women constructed two responses to their subordination in the patriarchy: they challenged it through the political movement of suffrage and attempted to "assimilate into the domestic role Christian patriarchy had constructed for [them]."69 Christina Rossetti was not a suffragette. She supported the two "spheres" of life in Victorian society: the public sphere of men and the domestic sphere of women. Most of Christina Rossetti's influences were
male. Rossetti does not completely nor successfully break from the male constructs concerning women in her writing. However, her poetry and the writings of other 18th and 19th-century women writers paved the way for 20th-century feminists like Elaine Showalter and Hélène Cixous. Christina Rossetti was a godmother for future female writers; Rossetti's "sisterhood" lives on in the 20th century.

Adhering to Victorian conventions, Rossetti would view Eve's fall as part of her disobedience to her married place in the patriarchy. Paying homage to earthly vanities rather than the rewards of the world to come--this is the sin of Eve. Eve "experiences sin, not at the Tree of Life with Satan, but in her dream; it allows her to envision what eventually captivates her mind during the temptation." In Rossetti's poetry, she attempts to purify this sin of humanity.

In the Bible, women as the daughters of Eve, are saved from the original sin through the bearing of children. God's prophesy of Eve as the mother of mankind delineates Eve as a redeemer of mankind before and after the Fall, in other words, that she saves, she is saved for, and she is saved by her capacity for motherhood. In Christina Rossetti's poetry, Eve and her words have a healing power due to her connection to Christ. John Shawcross states that there is definitely a parallel between Eve and Jesus as redemptive images in Genesis
due to their subordinated places in the hierarchy.\textsuperscript{73} Christina Rossetti sees this redemptive connection between Eve and Jesus as part of a cycle and not as part of a hierarchal relationship. All of the daughters of Eve participate in creation to redeem the calamities, wars and debauchery of the world that Eve's sin had let loose.\textsuperscript{74}

Milton's celebration of the creative power of woman in \textit{Paradise Lost} as conducted in the name of the masculine is something Christina Rossetti would have found abhorrent.\textsuperscript{75} The concept that women were commodities, tokens of exchange in a patriarchy and that therefore, authority and authorship were a solely masculine function was totally alien to Christina Rossetti's philosophy, religious beliefs, and self-concept. Christina Rossetti believed true freedom was obedience to God's laws, one of which was that creation was female and could come in the form of bearing children or creating in some other manifestation, as through writing. Concerning woman's place in the creation cycle, Karen Horney expostulates that first of all, woman's capacity to give birth is partly denied and partly devaluated: Eve was made from Adam's rib and a curse was put on her to bear children in sorrow. In the second place, by interpreting her tempting Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge, as a sexual temptation, woman appears as the sexual temptress, who plunges man into misery. I believe that these two elements, one born out of
resentment, the other out of anxiety, have damaged
the relationship between the sexes from the earliest
times to the present. 76

Woman's capacity to love, console, and purify are the things
Christina Rossetti emphasized in her poetry about
relationships. "Love and childbirth, its physical offspring,
are emblematic of Christ's presence."77 Christina Rossetti,
although not a mother herself, was very aware of "Christ's
presence" in childbirth, so much so that from 1873 to 1893 she
wrote a series of nursery rhyme, sing-song poems for
children.78 The illegitimate child was a constant reminder
in Victorian society of the woman's loss of innocence and
banishment from proper married society. However, Christina
Rossetti presents in her poems "A Triad," "Light Love," and
"Margery" that the difference between fallen and unfallen
status in women is invisible. All women have the potential to
be the objects of seduction and betrayal as in her poem
"Goblin Market."

The female contribution to mankind as Eve's legacy is
displayed in the poem "A Helpmeet for Him," written before
1891.79 The title of this poem paraphrases a line from
Genesis, that describes the relationship between Adam and Eve.

Woman was made for man's delight:

Charm, O woman, be not afraid!

His shadow by day, his moon by night,

Woman was made.
Her strength with weakness is overlaid;
Meek compliances veil her might;
Him she stays by whom she is stayed.

World-wide champion of truth and right,
Hope in gloom and in danger aid,
Tender and faithful, ruddy and white,
Woman was made.

This poem extols the virtues of the ideal Victorian woman who by bearing the silence and lower station of a woman in this time period shows her strength of forbearance as in the lines "Meek compliances veil her might" (1. 6). This ameliorates the sin of the original fall. The Victorian woman must emulate the original mother Eve who was "hope in gloom and in danger aid" (1. 9) to Adam. The line "Him she stays by whom she is stayed" (1. 7) not only refers to a woman's husband and the fidelity between them but also to the Tractarian connection of love between postulant and Christ.

"Finally, for Rossetti, the miracle of poetic creation is its potential for discovery, its ability to reveal the powerfully reforming truth." "The power of the female symbol found in Christian ideology enabled Rossetti to carry out a radical transformation that would empower [herself]." This "female symbol" is embodied in the person of Eve for Christina Rossetti. "The Thread of Life," written before 1882, examines Rossetti's reconciliation with her status as
a daughter of Eve. "Thus am I mine own prison. Everything/
Around me free and sunny and at ease...I am not what I have
nor what I do;/But what I was I am, I am even I" (ll. 15-6 and
27-8). Nowhere is the assertion that "poetic creation"
expressed Rossetti's self-empowerment more poignantly argued
than in "The Iniquity of the Fathers Upon the Children." The
lines that follow are the final lines of the poem and sum up
Christina Rossetti's view of herself as a daughter of Eve, as
a bride of Christ, and as a child of God. Christina Rossetti
used her poems and prose from 1860 to the end of her life to
assist her in a personal quest to fuse the entities of Laura
and Lizzie from "Goblin Market," the fallen woman and the
redeemer, inside Rossetti's own soul. At the end of her life,
Christina Rossetti made peace with the pain of being a
daughter of Eve, accepted the hardship of waiting for the
justice, peace, and the power of voice awaiting in the
afterlife:

I'll not blot out my shame
With any man's good name;
But nameless as I stand,
My hand is my own hand,
And nameless as I came
I go to the dark land.
'All equal in the grave'--
I bide my time till then:
'All equal before God'--
Today I feel His rod,
Tomorrow He may save:

    Amen.®
NOTES FROM CHAPTER 5
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2. Rossetti 369.
4. Rossetti 244.
5. Ibid. 243.
6. Ibid. 363.
7. Crump 142.
9. Crump 139.
12. Crump 125.
15. Rossetti lxxi.
18. Rossetti 244.
20. Rossetti 379.
27. Crump 120.
29. Rossetti 375.
32. Rossetti 406.
33. Crump II 106.
34. Ibid.
35. Rossetti 398.

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38. Crump 144.
39. Ibid. 150.
40. Rossetti lxxi.
42. Christina Rossetti 92.
45. William Rossetti lxxi.
47. William Rossetti lxxi.
49. Ibid. 310-1.
50. D'Amico 175.
52. D'Amico 188.
54. Crump 292.
55. Ibid.
57. Crump 321.
61. Scheinberg 250.
62. Crump 144.
63. Scheinberg 21.
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69. Scheinberg 21.


80. Crump II 169.


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APPENDIX I

"GOBLIN MARKET"

Morning and evening
Maids heard the goblins cry:
"Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy:
Apples and quinces,
Lemons and oranges,
Plump unpecked cherries,
Melons and raspberries,
Bloom-down-cheeked peaches,
Swart-headed mulberries,
Wild free-born cranberries,
Crab-apples, dewberries,
Pine-apples, blackberries,
Apricots, strawberries;--
All ripe together
In summer weather,--
Morns that pass by,
Fair eves that fly;
Come buy, come buy:
Our grapes fresh from the vine,
Pomegranates full and fine,
Dates and sharp bullaces,
Rare pears and greengages,
Damsons and bilberries,
Taste them and try:
Currants and gooseberries,
Bright-fire-like barberries,
Figs to fill your mouth,
Citrons from the South,
Sweet to tongue and sound to eye;
Come buy, come buy."

Evening by evening
Among the brookside rushes,
Laura bowed her head to hear,
Lizzie veiled her blushes:
Crouching close together
In the cooling weather,
With clasping arms and cautioning lips,
With tingling cheeks and finger tips.
"Lie close," Laura said,
Pricking up her golden head:
"We must not look at goblin men,
We must not buy their fruits:
Who knows upon what soil they fed
Their hungry thirsty roots?"
"Come buy," call the goblins
Hobbling down the glen.
"Oh," cried Lizzie, "Laura, Laura,
You should not peep at goblin men."
Lizzie covered up her eyes,
Covered close lest they should look;
Laura reared her glossy head,
And whispered like the restless brook:
"Look, Lizzie, look, Lizzie,
Down the glen tramp little men.
One hauls a basket,
One bears a plate,
One lugs a golden dish
Of many pounds weight.
How fair the vine must grow
Whose grapes are so luscious;
How warm the wind must blow
Thro' those fruit bushes."
"No," said Lizzie: "No, no, no;
Their offers should not charm us,
Their evil gifts would harm us."
She thrust a dimpled finger
In each ear, shut eyes and ran:
Curious Laura chose to linger
Wondering at each merchant man.
One had a cat's face,
One whisked a tail,
One tramped at a rat's pace,
One crawled like a snail,
One like a wombat prowled obtuse and furry,
One like a ratel tumbled hurry skurry.
She heard a voice like voice of doves
Cooing all together:
They sounded kind and full of loves
In the pleasant weather.

Laura stretched her gleaming neck
Like a rush-imbedded swan,
Like a lily from the beck,
Like a moonlit poplar branch,
Like a vessel at the launch
When its last restraint is gone.

Backwards up the mossy glen
Turned and trooped the goblin men,
With their shrill repeated cry,
"Come buy, come buy."
When they reached where Laura was
They stood stock still upon the moss,
Leering at each other,
Brother with queer brother;
Signalling each other,
Brother with sly brother.
One set his basket down,
One reared his plate;
One began to weave a crown
Of tendrils, leaves and rough nuts brown
(Men sell not such in any town);
One heaved the golden weight
Of dish and fruit to offer her:
"Come buy, come buy," was still their cry.
Laura stared but did not stir,
Longed but had no money:
The whisk-tailed merchant bade her taste
In tones as smooth as honey,
The cat-faced purr'd,
The rat-paced spoke a word
Of welcome, and the snail-paced even was heard;
One parrot-voiced and jolly
Cried "Pretty Goblin" still for "Pretty Polly;"
One whistled like a bird.

But sweet-tooth Laura spoke in haste:
"Good folk, I have no coin;
To take were to purloin:
I have no copper in my purse,
I have no silver either,
And all my gold is on the furze
That shakes in windy weather
Above the rusty heather."
"You have much gold upon you head,"
They answered all together:
"Buy from us with a golden curl."
She clipped a precious golden lock,
She dropped a tear more rare than pearl,
Then sucked their fruit globes fair or red:
Sweeter than honey from the rock.
Stronger than man-rejoicing wine,
Clearer than water flowed that juice;
She never tasted such before,
How should it cloy with length of use?
She sucked and sucked and sucked the more
Fruits which that unknown orchard bore;
She sucked until her lips were sore;
Then flung the emptied rinds away
But gathered up one kernel-stone,
And knew not was it night or day
As she turned home alone.
Lizzie met her at the gate
Full of wise upbraidings:
"Dear, you should not stay so late,
Twilight is not good for maidens;
Should not loiter in the glen
In the haunts of goblin men.
Do you not remember Jeanie,
How she met them in the moonlight,
Took their gifts both choice and many,
Ate their fruits and wore their flowers
Plucked from bowers
Where summer ripens at all hours?
But ever in the noonlight
She pined and pined away;
Sought them by night and day,
Found them no more, but dwindled and grew grey;
Then fell with the first snow,
While to this day no grass will grow
Where she lies low:
I planted daisies there a year ago
That never blow.
You should not loiter so."
"Nay, hush," said Laura:
"Nay, hush, my sister:
I ate and ate my fill,
Yet my mouth waters still;
To-morrow night I will
Buy more;" and kissed her:
"Have done with sorrow;
I'll bring you plums to-morrow
Fresh on their mother twigs,
Cherries worth getting;
You cannot think what figs
My teeth have met in,
What melons icy-cold
Piled on a dish of gold
Too huge for me to hold,
What peaches with a velvet nap,
Pellucid grapes without one seed:
Odorous indeed must be the mead
Whereon they grow, and pure the wave they drink
With lilies at the brink,
And sugar-sweet their sap."
Golden head by golden head,
Like two pigeons in one nest
Folded in each other's wings,
They lay down in their curtained bed:
Like two blossoms on one stem,
Like two flakes of new-fall'n snow,
Like two wands of ivory
Tipped with gold for awful kings.
Moon and stars gazed in at them,
Wind sang to them lullaby,
Lumbering owls forbore to fly,
Not a bat flapped to and fro
Round their rest:
Cheek to cheek and breast to breast
Locked together in one nest.

Early in the morning
When the first cock crowed his warning
Neat like bees, as sweet and busy,
Laura rose with Lizzie:
Called in honey, milked the cows,
Aired and set right the house,
Kneaded cakes of whitest wheat,
Cakes for dainty mouths to eat;
Next churned butter, whipped up cream,
Fed their poultry, sat and sewed;
Talked as modest maidens should:
Lizzie with an open heart,
Laura in an absent dream,
One content, one sick in part;
One warbling for the mere bright day's delight,
One longing for the night.

At length slow evening came:
They went with pitchers to the reedy brook:
Lizzie most placid in her look,
Laura most like a leaping flame.
They drew the gurgling water from its deep;
Lizzie plucked purple and rich golden flags,
Then turning homewards said: "The sunset flushes
Those furthest loftiest crags;
Come, Laura, not another maiden lags,
No wilful squirrel wags,
The beasts and birds are fast asleep."
But Laura loitered still among the rushes
And said the bank was steep.

And said the hour was early still,
The dew not fall'n, the wind not chill:
Listening ever, but not catching
The customary cry,
"Come buy, come buy,"
With its iterated jingle
Of sugar-baited words:
Not for all her watching
Once discerning even one goblin
Racing, whisking, tumbling, hobbling;
Let alone the herds
That used to tramp along the glen,
In groups or single,
Of brisk fruit-merchant men.
Till Lizzie urged, "O Laura, come;  
I hear the fruit-call, but I dare not look:  
You should not loiter longer at this brook:  
Come with me home.  
The stars rise, the moon bends her arc,  
Each glowworm winks her spark,  
Let us get home before the night grows dark:  
For clouds may gather  
Though this is summer weather,  
Put out the lights and drench us through;  
Then if we lost our way what should we do?"

Laura turned cold as stone  
To find her sister heard that cry alone.  
That goblin cry,  
"Come buy our fruits, come buy."  
Must she then buy no more such dainty fruit?  
Must she no more such succous pasture find,  
Gone deaf and blind?  
Her tree of life drooped from the root:  
She said not one word in her heart's sore ache;  
But peering thro' the dimness, nought discerning,  
Trudged home, her picher dripping all the way;  
So crept to bed, and lay  
Silent till Lizzie slept;  
Then sat up in a passionate yearning,  
And gnashed her teeth for baulked desire, and wept  
As if her heart would break.

Day after day, night after night,  
Laura kept watch in vain  
In sullen silence of exceeding pain.  
She never caught again the goblin cry:  
"Come buy, come buy;"--  
She never spied the goblin men  
Hawking their fruits along the glen:  
But when the noon waxed bright  
Her hair grew thin and grey;  
She dwindled, as the fair full moon doth turn  
To swift decay and burn  
Her fire away.

One day remembering her kernel-stone  
She set it by a wall that faced the south;  
Dewed it with tears, hoped for a root.  
Watched for a waxing shoot,  
But there came none;  
It never saw the sun,  
It never felt the trickling moisture run:  
While with sunk eyes and faded mouth  
She dreamed of melons, as a traveler sees  
False waves in desert drouth.
With shade of leaf-crowned trees,
And burns the thirstier in the sandful breeze.

She no more swept the house,
Tended the fowls or cows,
Fetched honey, kneaded cakes of wheat,
Brought water from the brook:
But sat down listless in the chimney-nook
And would not eat.

Tender Lizzie could not bear
To watch her sister's cankerous care
Yet not to share.
She night and morning
Caught the goblins' cry:
"Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy:"--
Beside the brook, along the glen,
She heard the tramp of goblin men,
The voice and stir
Poor Laura could not hear;
Longed to buy fruit to comfort her,
But feared to pay too dear.
She thought of Jeanie in her grave,
Who should have been a bride;
But who for joys brides hope to have
Fell sick and died
In her gay prime,
In earliest Winter time,
With the first glazing rime,
With the first snow-fall of crisp Winter time.

Till Laura dwindling
Seemed knocking at Death's door:
Then Lizzie weighed no more
Better and worse;
But put a silver penny in her purse,
Kissed Laura, crossed the heath with clumps of furze
At twilight, halted by the brook:
And for the first time in her life
Began to listen and look.

Laughed every goblin
When they spied her peeping:
Came towards her hobbling,
Flying, running, leaping,
Puffing and blowing,
Chuckling, clapping, crowing,
Clucking and gobbling,
Mopping and mowing,
Full of airs and graces,
Pulling wry faces,
Demure grimaces,
Cat-like and rat-like,
Ratel- and wombat-like,
Snail-paced in a hurry,
Parrot-voiced and whistler,
Helter skelter, hurry skurry,
Chattering like magpies,
Fluttering like pigeons,
Gliding like fishes,--
Hugged her and kissed her:
Squeezed and caressed her:
Stretched up their dishes,
Panniers, and plates:
"Look at our apples
Russet and dun,
Bob at our cherries,
Bite at our peaches,
Citrons and dates,
Grapes for the asking,
Pears red with basking
Out in the sun,
Plums on their twigs;
Pluck them and suck them,
Pomegranates, figs."--

"Good folk," said Lizzie,
Mindful of Jeanie:
"Give me much and many:"--
Held out her apron,
Tossed them her penny.
"Nay, take a seat with us,
Honour and eat with us."
They answered grinning:
"Our feast is but beginning,
Night yet is early,
Warm and dew-pearly,
Wakeful and starry:
Such fruits as these
No man can carry;
Half their bloom would fly,
Half their dew would dry,
Half their flavour would pass by.
Sit down and feast with us,
Be welcome guest with us,
Cheer you and rest with us."--
"Thank you," said Lizzie: "But one waits
At home alone for me:
So without further parleying,
If you will not sell me any
Of your fruits though much and many,
Give me back my silver penny
I tossed you for a fee."--
They began to scratch their pates,
No longer wagging, purring,
But visibly demurring,
Grunting and snarling.
One called her proud,
Cross-grained, uncivil;
Their tones waxed loud,
Their looks were evil.
Lashing their tails
They trod and hustled her,
Elbowed and jostled her,
Clawed with their nails,
Barking, mewing, hissing, mocking,
Tore her gown and soiled her stocking,
Twitched her hair out by the roots,
Stamped upon her tender feet,
Held her hands and squeezed their fruits
Against her mouth to make her eat.

White and golden Lizzie stood,
Like a lily in a flood,—
Like a rock of blue-veined stone
Lashed by tides obstreperously,—
Like a beacon left alone
In a hoary roaring sea,
Sending up a golden fire,—
Like a fruit-crowned orange-tree
White with blossoms honey-sweet
Sore beset by wasp and bee,—
Like a royal virgin town
Topped with gilded dome and spire
Close beleaguered by a fleet
Mad to tug her standard down.

One may lead a horse to water,
Twenty cannot make him drink.
Though the goblins cuffed and caught her,
Coaxed and fought her,
Bullied and besought her,
Scratched her, pinched her black as ink,
Kicked and knocked her,
Mauled and mocked her,
Lizzie uttered not a word;
Would not open lip from lip
Lest they should cram a mouthful in:
But laughed in heart to feel the drip
Of juice that syrupped all her face,
And lodged in dimples of her chin,
And streaked her neck which quaked like curd.
At last the evil people,
Worn out by her resistance,
Flung back her penny, kicked their fruit
Along whichever road they took,
Not leaving root or stone or shoot;
Some writhed into the ground,
Some dived into the brook
With ring and ripple,
Some scudded on the gale without a sound,
Some vanished in the distance.

In a smart, ache, tingle,
Lizzie went her way;
Knew not was it night or day;
Sprang up the bank, tore thro' the furze,
Threaded copse and dingle,
And heard her penny jingle
Bouncing in her purse,—
Its bounce was music to her ear.
She ran and ran
As if she feared some goblin man
Dogged her with gibe or curse
Or something worse:
But not one goblin skurried after,
Nor was she pricked by fear;
The kind heart made her windy-paced
That urged her home quite out of breath with haste
And inward laughter.

She cried "Laura," up the garden,
"Did you miss me?
Come and kiss me.
Never mind my bruises,
Hug me, kiss me, suck my juices
Squeezed from goblin fruits for you,
Goblin pulp and goblin dew.
Eat me, drink me, love me;
Laura, make much of me;
For your sake I have braved the glen
And had to do with goblin merchant men."

Laura started from her chair,
Flung her arms up in the air,
Clutched her hair:
"Lizzie, Lizzie, have you tasted
For my sake the fruit forbidden?
Must your light like mine be hidden,
Your young life like mine be wasted,
Undone in mine undoing,
And ruined in my ruin,
Thirsty, cankered, goblin-ridden?"--
She clung about her sister,
Kissed and kissed and kissed her:
Tears once again
Refreshed her shrunken eyes,
Dropping like rain
After long sultry drouth;
Shaking with anguish fear, and pain,
She kissed and kissed her with a hungry mouth.

    Her lips began to scorch,
That juice was wormwood to her tongue,
She loathed the feast:
Writhing as one possessed she leaped and sung,
Rent all her robe, and wrung
Her hands in lamentable haste,
And beat her breast.
Her locks streamed like the torch
Borne by a racer at full speed,
Or like the mane of horses in their flight,
Or like an eagle when she stems the light
Straight toward the sun,
Or like a caged thing freed,
Or like a flying flag when armies run.

    Swift fire spread through her veins, knocked at her heart,
Met the fire smouldering there
And overbore its lesser flame;
She gorged on bitterness without a name:
Ah! fool, to choose such part
Of soul-consuming care!
Sense failed in the mortal strife:
Like the watch-tower of a town
Which an earthquake shatters down,
Like a lightning-stricken mast,
Like a wind-uprooted tree
Spun about,
Like a foam-topped waterspout
Cast down headlong in the sea
She fell at last;
Pleasure past and anguish past,
Is it death or is it life?

    Life out of death,
That night long Lizzie watched by her,
Counted her pulse's flagging stir,
Felt for her breath,
Held water to her lips, and cooled her face
With tears and fanning leaves:
But when the first birds chirped about their eaves,
And early reapers plodded to the place
Of golden sheaves,
And dew-wet grass
Bowed in the morning winds so brisk to pass,
And new buds with new day
Opened of cup-like lilies on the stream,
Laura awoke as from a dream,
Laughed in the innocent old way,
Hugged Lizzie but not twice or thrice;
Her gleaming locks showed not one thread of grey
Her breath was sweet as May
And light danced in her eyes.

Days, weeks, months, years
Afterwards, when both were wives
With children of their own;
Their mother-hearts beset with fears,
Their lives bound up in tender lives;
Laura would call the little ones
And tell them of her early prime,
Those pleasant days long gone
Of not-returning time:
Would talk about the haunted glen,
The wicked, quaint fruit-merchant men,
Their fruits like honey to the throat
But poison in the blood;
(Men sell not such in any town):
Would tell them how her sister stood
In deadly peril to do her good,
And win the fiery antidote:
Then joining hands to little hands
Would bid them cling together,
"For there is no friend like a sister
In calm or stormy weather;
To cheer one on the tedious way,
To fetch one if one goes astray,
To lift one if one totters down,
To strengthen whilst one stands."


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