

Dante Gabriel Rossetti: The Poet as Craftsman by Robert N. Keane. New York: Peter Lang, 2002. x, 222 pp. ISBN 0-8204-5114-2. \$55.95.

Professor Keane's book is the labour of a lifetime, begun during graduate studies at Columbia and continued through forty-two years teaching at Hofstra. While the subtitle directs our attention to Rossetti's skill as a poet, this study seeks to explain not so much what the poems mean as how they were made, focussing primarily on manuscript versions. These documents are abundant and widely scattered. Rossetti agonized over every word of his poetry, "tattooing" his MSS with variants and redrafting his verse in sketchbooks, letters, multiple MSS, proofsheets, and even in printed texts which he modified for the next edition. He displayed a Shakespearian indifference towards preserving his texts, until after he commenced publishing his original poetry. Keane devotes thirty pages to telling the story of *Poems* (1870). The timeline begins on 15 November 1861, when Rossetti instructed the printer of his book of translations *The Early Italian Poets* to advertise his original volume (the MSS that ended up shortly thereafter in Lizzie's coffin) by including on an *errata* slip the announcement "Will shortly be published *Poems* by D.G. Rossetti." Keane has made extensive use of the late Professor Fredeman's edition of Rossetti's letters, which will be complete in ten volumes, only three of which are so far published. However, Fredeman allowed Keane to consult his edition in progress, so that many unpublished and unknown letters are brought into play in this study, the first to utilize a monumental collection that more than doubles the number of letters collected in the flawed Doughty-Wahl edition of 1965-67. Unfortunately, Keane had to refer to the latter edition and to MS letters instead of using *The Correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti* numbers, since the death of Professor Fredeman in 1999 plunged his edition into temporary chaos. By mid-July of 1869, after printing those poems of which he could find copies, Rossetti started writing several new poems and began a process of pulling and revising proofs that lasted nine months. In order to simplify his analysis of this multitude of revisions, variants, additions, and deletions, Keane has set up and dated seven major proof sets, eliminating the confusions and distortions about "private issues" and "trial books" introduced into Rossetti bibliography by Thomas J. Wise and H. Buxton Forman.

The painter's reluctance to exhibit is mirrored in the poet's anxiety over public scrutiny. Just as he painted over sections of his pictures, replacing one model's head with another, or struggling to get the calf right in the never-completed painting *Found*, he rewrote "Sister Helen" until the MSS became a printer's and editor's nightmare. However, the canard that he should have painted his poems and written his pictures is exposed as a critical fallacy by Keane's careful analysis of what Rossetti strove to achieve as a poetic craftsman. He always denied that he was a word-painter. To his acolyte Hall