


D.G. ROSSETTI RECEIVES
THE MANUSCRIPT OF HIS POEMS

Michael Martin



Howell said the coffin was filled with her gold
Hair, a shroud spun by worms of beauty and art.
Howell is a poet and a man of tact,
Though all men are liars, poets most of all.
According to Howell and the doctor,
She lies there like an uncorrupted saint;
Nevertheless, precautionary flame
Accompanied them to the sepulchre.
They found the manuscript bound in rough, gray calf
At her right hand. As if she'd been reading.
Delicately they stole the forsaken thing,
Dipped each leaf in a bath of alcohol.
The ink is faded, bled; the leaves worm-holed.
All words are lies, poems most of all.