

Christina Rossetti's Gothic by Serena Trowbridge. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013. 203 pp. ISBN 978-1-4411-1443-3. £60; \$110.

Since the recovery of her work by feminist critics of the 1970s and 1980s, Christina Rossetti has taken her rightful place as one of the nineteenth century's most important poets, and one of the most popular subjects of Victorian scholarship. Rossetti's religious poetry was neglected during her twentieth-century rehabilitation, in part because the poet's faith was considered to be incompatible with her literary imagination. Continuing work begun by G.B. Tennyson's ground-breaking *Victorian Devotional Poetry* (1981) and Diane D'Amico's *Christina Rossetti: Faith, Gender, and Time* (1991), current criticism re-situates Rossetti's devotional writing in the context of nineteenth-century Anglo-Catholic revivalism and the Tractarian writers who inspired it. Recent examples include Elizabeth Ludlow's *Christina Rossetti and the Bible* (2014) and Emma Mason's forthcoming volume for Oxford's *Spiritual Lives* series.

Christina Rossetti's Gothic acknowledges the centrality of Rossetti's faith, but Serena Trowbridge sounds a note of caution about the critical recovery of the devotional work, contending that "her label as a religious poet may cause aspects of her poetry which belong to a different tradition to be ignored." This perhaps overstates the case, as other facets of her work are well-represented in recent significant works, including Constance Hassett's chapter, "Christina Rossetti: Ravens, Cockatoos and Range," in *The Oxford Handbook of Victorian Poetry* (2013) and Anne Jamison's *Poetics en Passant: Redefining the Relationship between Victorian and Modern Poetry* (2009), which makes a cross-channel comparison of Rossetti's and Baudelaire's transgressive poetics.

Yet Trowbridge is right to be wary of the perils of over-correction, particularly where Rossetti is concerned. Critical attempts to affix any one label to the poet generally become unstuck when applied to a poetics slippery with mysteries, doubts, and uncertainties. Perhaps one of the most significant arguments to emerge from Trowbridge's work (albeit implicitly) is the need for further, more detailed analysis of the poet's Romantic inheritance to complement the continuing investigation of her Tractarian poetics.

Trowbridge begins with a useful review of previous criticism concerning the influence of the Gothic on Rossetti's work, pairing this with a discussion of the genre's strained relationship with Tractarianism and the Oxford Movement. The introduction takes care to acknowledge the problematic nature of the term "Gothic," raising provocative points about the lack of critical attention to its manifestations in nineteenth-century poetry (as opposed to prose) and connecting the mutability of its modes with its literary longevity. While