

NEW CONTEXTS, NEW MEANINGS: REPRINTS OF
DANTE ROSSETTI'S AND CHRISTINA ROSSETTI'S
POETRY IN THE AMERICAN PRESS

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Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Christina Rossetti published a significant number of their poems in periodicals before collecting them in book form. Jerome McGann's *Rossetti Archive* lists 43 original poems among Dante Rossetti's magazine contributions; without exception these known poems were published in British periodicals, most notably *The Germ*, *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, and *The Fortnightly Review*. His sister published 87, according to Maura Ives's recent bibliography of her work;¹ we know she submitted some of these poems to American magazines in the last two decades of her life. As Lorraine Janzen Kooistra has pointed out, Christina Rossetti was impressed by the visual appeal of popular illustrated periodicals in the U.S., like *Scribner's Monthly*, *St. Nicholas Magazine*, and *Wide-Awake*, "which catered to the increasing demand for pictures in printed texts," and was eager to have her work translated into a different artistic medium (45). At the same time, Rossetti was careful not to rush into agreements that could jeopardize the British copyright to her work. She knew that periodical publication allowed for less authorial agency in the relationship between text and image than she was used to exercising, often in close collaboration with her brother, while working on her poetry volumes. "Even in her lifetime," Kooistra notes, "factors beyond the author's control resulted in certain textual effects that influenced reception and interpretation. Once her works had become part of the public domain with the expiration of copyright in the early twentieth century, illustrated Rossettis proliferated and meanings multiplied with their audiences" (7-8). What Kooistra's study, in its focus on illustration, does not take into account is that Rossetti's writings had started to proliferate in the American press long before she submitted her first poems there. From

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