

## CONVERSING IN VERSE

*Conversing in Verse* considers poems of conversation from the late eighteenth into the twentieth centuries – the very period when a more restrictive conception of poetry as the lyric product of the poet’s solitary self-communing became entrenched. With fresh insight, Elizabeth K. Helsinger addresses a range of questions at the core of conversational poetry: When and why do poets turn to conversation to explore poetry’s potential? How do conversation’s forms and intentions shape the figures, rhythms, and prosody of poems to alter the reader’s experience? What are the ethical and political stakes of conversing in verse? Coleridge, Clare, Landor, Tennyson, Robert Browning, Christina and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Swinburne, Michael Field, and Hardy each composed poems that open difficult or impossible conversations with phenomena outside themselves. Helsinger unearths an unfamiliar lyric history that produced some of the most interesting formal experiments of the nineteenth century, including its best known, the dramatic monologue.

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# CONVERSING IN VERSE

*Conversation in Nineteenth-Century English Poetry*

ELIZABETH K. HELSINGER

*University of Chicago*



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