POETS IN BRIEF

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

An Anthology

Chosen by

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To

KENICHI YOSHIDA

CONTENTS

PART II

Poets chiefly before Dante

ORIGINAL POEMS

NOTE

My readers' thanks, as well as mine, are due to Mr G. A. Rossetti, the nephew of the poet, for his generous permission to include here some of his uncle's posthumously published work, which is still copyright—*The Sin of Detection*, *Another Love*, parts of *A Trip to Paris and Belgium* and *Dennis Shand*, *Lines from the Roman de la Rose*, *Valentine to Lizzie Siddal*, *The Orchard-pit*, and several Limericks.

The poems in this selection are printed as far as possible (for some were written partly at one date, partly at another) in chronological order.

The introduction is a revised and enlarged version of the chapter on Rossetti in my *Eight Victorian Poets*. I am indebted to the newly published life of Gabriele Rossetti by Mr R. D. Waller for the slightly different and more circumstantial version of his escape from Naples in 1821.

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INTRODUCTION

Tous ces grands artistes brûlent la chandelle par les deux bouts: il leur faut une existence dévergondée qui excite un peu l'imagination. Mais ils meurent à l'hôpital, parce qu'ils n'ont pas eu l'esprit, étant jeunes, de faire des économies.

MONSIEUR HOMAIS, in *Madame Bovary*

ONE EVENING in the year 1821 a couple of English subalterns knocked at a door in Naples. They vanished within and a little later reappeared with a third figure in the uniform of a British lieutenant, who got into a carriage with them and drove away. In that moment Italy was giving something to repay England's loss when, in the year that followed, the waters of the Gulf of Spezzia closed over Shelley's head. The figure in disguise was Gabriele Rossetti, the son of a blacksmith at Vasto in the Abruzzi. His grandfather was a shoemaker and his mother could neither read nor write; though earlier ancestors are said to have been not without note under the name of della Guardia, with a family motto by which Christina Rossetti was to live out her life to its desolate end—'Frangas, non flectas'; and of Gabriele's three brothers one was to become a canon and a preacher of some fame, another to be a lawyer, and all to be poets. Gabriele himself, a boy of promise, had been sent by the Marchese di Vasto to the University of Naples; then become an official in the Museum and a writer of opera-libretti. In 1820 he took part in the Liberal rising which extorted a constitution from King Ferdinand; in 1821 King Ferdinand, backed by Austrian bayonets, stamped out his own constitution and proscribed the Liberals, among them Rossetti, who had wildly hymned

the revolution. His escape was arranged, as related, by the sympathy of Lady Moore, wife of the British admiral in Naples Harbour and sister-in-law of Sir John Moore of Corunna. It seems a very peculiar proceeding, from a naval and a diplomatic point of view; but it added to the roll of English poets two of the children born to the exile in London by the half-Italian wife he married there—Dante Gabriel and Christina Rossetti.

That odd household in Charlotte Street, where Gabriele in the intervals of teaching Italian compiled mystical interpretations of Dante, while motley victims of the reactionary governments of Europe ('cercatori o seccatori', many of them, 'borrowers or bores') gathered to execrate Louis Philippe and Metternich and to give the young poet a lifelong distaste for both politics and foreigners, is familiar to all who delight in the pencil of Mr Max Beerbohm. There Dante Gabriel and Christina grew up writing sonnets, with Italian precocity, to *bouts rimés* and lavishing passionate interest on strange animals. In another way also, for us, the future already throws its shadow; those who share Hardy's taste for life's ironies will not read without a certain sense of fatal appropriateness how the four Rossetti children identified themselves each with one of the four suits of cards—Maria, whose blunter mind was in some ways to dominate her more sensitive sister, taking clubs; the passionate Dante Gabriel, hearts; the flawless Christina, diamonds; the common-sense William Michael, spades. Chance, helped perhaps by instinctive choice, was to prove in this a subtle fortune-teller. Rossetti's own poem *The Card-dealer*, though the symbolism is there made wholly sinister, shows that this childish fantasy left its mark on his memory.

Twenty-eight years after the rising that cost Gabriele Rossetti his country, while a new train of revolutions was

exploding across the Europe of 1848, three young men in a house in Gower Street sat planning a little revolution of their own. Their names were William Holman Hunt, John Millais, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. They were painters and the eldest was only twenty-one. But for all that their revolution was to be more successful than most. It was needed.

The nineteenth century had reached middle-age. There was a feeling in the air of exhaustion and stagnation. Turner was an old man with only two years more to live, and with no successor. Painting was dominated by the Royal Academy; and the Royal Academy was dominated by Raphael. Raphael had a habit of arranging his figures pyramidally, on a ground-line describing a letter S, with the highest light on the principal figure; therefore all young painters, as they loved their livelihood, must learn to arrange their figures pyramidally, on a ground-line describing the letter S, with the highest light on the principal figure. There was no appeal. To quote Ruskin: 'We begin, in all probability, by telling the youth of fifteen or sixteen that Nature is full of faults and that he is to improve her: but that Raphael is perfect, and the more he copies Raphael, the better: that after much copying of Raphael he is to try what he can do himself in a Raphaelesque but yet original manner: that is to say, he is to try to do something very clever all out of his own head, but yet this clever something is to be properly subjected to Raphaelesque rules'. Poetry was less cramped; but here too Tennyson had already become a sort of Raphael, and bestrode a world in which there seemed no new thing left to do.

It was in painting that the revolt began. On that October evening in 1848 was founded the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, which came to consist of Hunt, Millais, Rossetti, and four others. Their main principle was a return to Nature; most

artistic revolutions are, indeed, returns to Nature. That is itself very natural. A great artist arises; he forms a school and a style; the style stiffens into a formula, a 'soulless self-reflection of man's skill'; until at last a new generation blazes into revolt and 'returns to Nature'. These young men wanted to get back from formulae to truth, from vague generalizations to seeing things vividly and minutely. They wanted something less idealized than Raphael; they found it in the simpler sincerity of the Italian painters before him; hence their name. That was all.

There seems little in all this to upheave society from its foundations. And yet no sooner was the existence of the Brotherhood betrayed by an indiscretion of Rossetti's, than pandemonium was let loose. The young Pre-Raphaelites were denounced by their frightened and infuriated elders as monsters of conceit, affectation, hideousness, obscenity, and blasphemy. Dickens thundered in *Household Words*; Charles Kingsley pronounced their ideals worthy of 'a petrified Cyclops'; clergymen wrote pamphlets prophesying 'Woe, woe, woe to exceedingly young men of stubborn instincts calling themselves Pre-Raphaelites'; and it was only the entrance of Ruskin into the battle with two letters to *The Times* that turned the struggle in their favour. The frenzies died away; the young painters themselves followed diverging paths; the Brotherhood dropped to pieces; and in after-years Rossetti would be irritated by people's interest in it. 'Madam,' he said once, 'I am not an -ite of any sort: I am only a painter.' That was true; but for all that the movement left its mark both on painting and poetry.

In poetry, too, the essential idea of the Pre-Raphaelites, as expressed in a short-lived paper unhappily baptized *The Germ*, was a return to sincerity and simplicity—a simplicity some-

times mediaeval, sometimes also mystical; a love of little things and of beauty drawn in as simply as the breath.

> Our mother rose from where she sat:
> Her needles, as she laid them down,
> Met lightly, and her silken gown
> Settled; no other noise than that.

It is like the utterance of a child, naïve in its language and with a child's fresh perception of sights and sounds as slight as the tiny chink of needles laid aside; and yet it is not really childish at all, being highly sophisticated underneath. It recalls the pure, cold air of autumn mornings, their grass white with dew, which feel for a moment fresh as spring; though, overhead, the finger of decay has dyed their leaves. But this spring-like freshness does not last; with Rossetti and Morris, and still more with Swinburne, extreme simplicity was only one dawning phase. Christina Rossetti did indeed preserve it all her life; she was in that the truest Pre-Raphaelite of them all. But in her brother the limpid autumn morning gives place to the brooding, sultry, thunderous heat of an autumn afternoon; an atmosphere that some find stifling, but few, who have once felt it, can forget.

Meanwhile, however, he turned mainly to painting. In a moment of despair during the uproar against him of 1850 he had considered becoming a railway telegraph-clerk; but one sight of the apparatus proved enough. Then persistence and, in 1854, the intervention of Ruskin 'in a mood to make my fortune' set his feet on the ladder which was to raise him to fame and commissions for as much as £4000 in a year. The question whether Rossetti felt himself a poet who also painted, or a painter who also wrote poetry, has been solemnly debated; and a recent biography has definitely pronounced the

second view to be the true one, with that terrifying assurance of modern biographers from whom the inmost hearts of their victims can no longer remain hid. Rossetti himself, however, had the temerity on at least some occasions to take a different view. As early as 1848, torn by this dilemma between his two vocations, he had sent some of his verse to Leigh Hunt with a request for advice; Leigh Hunt, wiser, as many are, about the affairs of others than his own, very sensibly replied that painting might earn leisure for poetry, but not the reverse. Let him paint. Rossetti's career justified this advice to the letter. But the very fact that there was no pot-boiling about his verse tended to give it, in his eyes, a certain superiority, the charm of a truant love disinterestedly pursued. In 1870 he writes—'My own belief is that I am a poet (within the limit of my powers) primarily'; and in 1871—'Painting has kept me from the other Muse who, I believe, after all, is my true mistress'. After that, I do not see how one can so confidently assert the contrary. It is not a simple question; clearly his own feelings may often have veered about the point. And it is not an important question; enough that he did both—with benefit, I think, though some differ, to his poetry.

The rest of his life all know—how he fell in love with Lizzie Siddal, the daughter of a Sheffield tradesman, though of a family said to go back to the fifteenth century, a pallid, auburn-haired, consumptive beauty, with a strange gift of her own for drawing and writing like a born Pre-Raphaelite; how after ten years they were married, and two years later still, sick and unhappy and realizing that she had been married in the end for duty, not for love, she poisoned herself with laudanum; how in an agony of remorse he buried his poems in her coffin, between her cheek and hair; how they lay under the earth of Highgate seven years, until they were raised again

from beside that still perfect face and given to the world;[1] how amid the praise that greeted them rose one voice, Robert Buchanan's, denouncing Rossetti as a satyr and a sensualist; how, shaken already by insomnia and chloral, his mind now gave way till he thought all the world leagued against him, the very thrushes singing in his garden put there by his enemies to drive him mad, the chaffinch he picked up in the road his dead wife's soul; how he was nursed back to a sort of health for ten years more of painting and poetry till he died, still only fifty-three, at Birchington on Easter Sunday, 1882.

He is a sombre figure, the Rossetti of the closing years—this eccentric, passionate, heavy-featured Italian, so handsome once, now vainly rapping tables to recall Lizzie Siddal's spirit, or tossing sleepless in the gloom of that lonely room in Cheyne Walk, black and stifling with its velvet curtains and old oak, while outside in the garden stirred uneasily in their slumber the strange beasts he had gathered there, wombats and marmots and racoons and armadillos, ravens and owls and chameleons and salamanders, a perfect Goblin Market of them. And yet to the last there remained something imperial about him, like a falling Caesar alone in his capital; his old friends he had estranged—Ruskin, Madox Brown, William Morris; yet his personality, his power, the wit that flashed across his gloom, still conquered others. Whistler was not an easy character to deal with. But during his last illness, says

[1] It is truly astonishing what orgies of disapproval this now famous episode has provoked. It was surely very human to bury the poems; very human to want them back. It is not typically English to be so dramatic; it need not be the worse for that: it *is* however, unfortunately, typically English to indulge in cant about 'violating the secrets of the grave'. The only comment on the matter I have seen that one could respect, came from a countrywoman of Rossetti's, Eleanora Duse: 'He was quite right to reclaim the poems; but he should have gone himself'. (He sat waiting in a house near by.) That is the utterance of a woman with a sense both of life and of poetry.

Mr Ford Madox Ford, someone in the room made a remark disparaging Rossetti; the dying man opened his eyes—'You must not say anything against Rossetti. Rossetti was a king'. There was this greatness about him. It is not a quality for which much space is usually found in modern biographies. It is not sufficiently amusing. But it was there.

As in the man, so in the artist, we can feel this transition from morning purity to the sultry heaviness of an autumn afternoon, where, in his own phrase,

> Thundered the heat within the hills.

Just as in his life the pale face of Lizzie Siddal gave place to the full-flushed beauty of Fanny Cornforth, so in his pictures the bright girlhood of Mary Virgin yielded to the dark and brooding beauty of Proserpine, in his verse the Blessed Damozel was replaced by the Siren who stands waiting in the apple-boughs above the pit of dead men's bones, in that grim poem left unfinished when he died:

> Piled deep below the screening apple-branch
> They lie with bitten apples in their hands:
> And some are only ancient bones that blanch,
> And some had ships that last year's wind did launch,
> And some were yesterday the lords of lands.
>
> In the soft dell, among the apple-trees,
> High up above the hidden pit she stands,
> And there for ever sings, who gave to these,
> That lie below, her magic hour of ease,
> And those her apples holden in their hands.

Rossetti knew well the place and the Siren and the apple: he had himself tasted it. What a change indeed between his first state and his last! Early and late, his work casts, somehow, a spell: but in the later years his white magic has turned into black. His spirit seems to sit like La Pia as he painted her

looking out across the malarial desolation of the Maremma to the onward-drifting mist of death. Yet, after all, with a little wisdom after the event we can see now how natural a change in part at least it was. Indeed, we may wonder whether those who screeched so grotesquely at the young Pre-Raphaelites in 1850, were not by some dim instinct wiser in their generation than they knew. For rebels like Arnold and Mill and George Eliot were rebels only of the intellect, fighting for freedom of thought; but behind this young Italian lay a rebellion of the senses, a war of liberation of the passions. He might paint white Virgins with lilies; we can see now how those lilies were to fester, how from that Virgin were in the end to spring the Dolores of Swinburne and the Salome of Oscar Wilde. This warm breath from the South, fluttering the aspidistras and muslin curtains of the Victorians, was the forerunner of a gale that has blown their padded domesticity inside out by now; and when in 1870 Rossetti's poems came into the world from that grave at Highgate, and the Prussian batteries closed in around Sedan, the first cracks were spreading further in the foundations of that snug Victorian universe. For Rossetti was part of a larger movement than his own—the return of paganism, the unchaining of Dionysus; and his triumph and his despair were both alike in the nature of things—his triumph, because the Victorians were trying to shut their eyes to a side of life that will not be denied; and the sadness of his despair, because with the beauty of the senses that he pursued—

> How passionately and irretrievably,
> In what fond flight how many ways and days!—

there comes also this shattering sense of transience and decay. It cannot be helped; a passionate sensitiveness to beauty has to be paid for, like everything else; it is a Love that walks hand in

hand with Death. No race has felt that passion more intensely than the Greeks; and none has felt more intensely the bitterness of time. They did not write, in the style of Browning's *Rabbi ben Ezra*, amiable ditties about the blessings of old age, but rather, like Theognis—

> ἄφρονες ἄνθρωποι καὶ νήπιοι, οἵτε θανόντας
> κλαίουσ', οὐδ' ἥβης ἄνθος ἀπολλύμενον.
>
> What fools are men, how mad, that for the dead
> Go weeping, not for youth's sweet petals shed!

And so it was natural that Rossetti, who had, I think, a passion for the loveliness of life more violent than any English poet, even Keats, should so soon exchange his youthful freshness for this brooding, haunted sense of lost days and vanished hours, that he saw standing like phantoms before him, 'sleepless, with cold commemorative eyes'. What wonder if he felt it doubly, when among those phantoms lurked also the lost face of Lizzie Siddal?

> There is a change in every hour's recall,
> And the last cowslip in the field we see
> On the same day with the first corn-poppy:
> Alas for hourly change! Alas for all
> The Loves that from his hand proud Youth lets fall
> Even as the beads of a told rosary!
>
> * * * *
>
> What whisperest thou? Nay, why
> Name the dead hours? I mind them well.
> Their ghosts in many darkened doorways dwell
> With desolate eyes to know them by.

'Tears, idle tears'—but these taste bitterer than Tennyson's. Year by year, as Rossetti thus broods upon the past, his whole tone grows dreamier, his pictures darker and fleshlier, his verse exchanges its first bell-like, silver sound for the organ-

tone of long Latin words, that roll thundering onward like some Mass sung for the dead.

> O love, my love, if I no more should see
> Thyself, nor on the earth the shadow of thee,
> Nor image of thine eyes in any spring—
> How then should sound upon Life's darkening slope
> The ground-whirl of the perished leaves of Hope,
> The wind of Death's imperishable wing!

And yet even when we have recognized many features in him as natural to a passionate Italian artist immured in mid-Victorian London, even when we have explained one thing by race and another by unhappy circumstance, there still clings about the personality of Rossetti something more mysterious, something ambiguous and a little sinister, which is yet part of his fascination, like the darkness of a forest. To be grasping yet generous, sceptical yet superstitious, Bohemian yet unnerved by the first snarl of English respectability—these are, after all, very human inconsistencies, of no uncommon kind. A stranger thing, though psychology is beginning to shed a glimmering light upon it, is the combination in a character like his of sensualist and idealist—that divided impulse which is fascinated alternately by innocence and guilt; which dragged Dante from his starry love to loose living; which drove Byron from Augusta to Lady Byron, and from Lady Byron to the slums of Venice, and from Venice to la Guiccioli; which made Rossetti thrill to the appeal both of Mary Virgin and of Mary Magdalene, of Beatrice and of Jenny, of the Blessed Damozel and of Circe; until he felt all the more passionately the passionless whiteness of the lily above him, as his own feet seemed to sink in mire, and yet came to taste with a fierce intoxication the sense of self-destruction, the guilt of Rose Mary and of Sister Helen, of Aloÿse in *The*

Bride's Prelude and of the country girl in 'Found', the lure of Astarte Syriaca and Venus Verticordia, the kiss of the Siren's mouth. It is as if behind the state of mind revealed by poetry and painting like his there lay a combined love and hate for purity, for that maternal ideal, which cannot be possessed and so drives its victim to the opposite extreme of shameful love, in order to spare and yet at the same time in order to outrage and defy (as with Proust's Mademoiselle Vinteuil) the forbidden and forbidding shape. So passion becomes divorced from affection, Love's body from his soul; and that divorce, so passionately protested against by other instincts, in its turn engenders a deeper sense of guilt, craving for pain as punishment and yet perversely enjoying the pain it craves; until at last the mind comes to feast on its own sin like Byron's Manfred and longs only to plunge down its last mad spiral to the ultimate inferno. And it is because in Rossetti, as in Byron, there still lingers some half-belief in damnation and eternal pain, that their agonizings become more than mere maladies of modern nerves and regain some of the tragic intensity of those ages when Hell felt hot beneath men's feet. Mediaevalism was more with Rossetti than mere pastiche. He was very nearly capable, sometimes, of melting a waxen man. The reader of his later work or of his life is often reminded of the sinister Italy of Elizabethan drama, of those Renaissance figures haunted at moments amid the golden sensuousness of the world of Ariosto by spectres from the older world of Dante. Until it seems as if it were the poet's own voice we heard crying in *Sister Helen*—

A soul that's lost, as mine is lost;

or, again, murmuring in *The Orchard-pit*—'I love her only as the stone whirling down the rapids loves the dead leaf that

travels with it and clings to it, and that the same eddy will swallow up'. And, whatever its true explanation (simple lying perhaps), it is hard to forget, so in keeping is it with Rossetti's life, the story told by William Bell Scott, who solemnly affirms that in the distant room in Penkill Castle in Ayrshire where the poet used to sit reading his verse over to himself, after Rossetti had gone back to London, the droning voice could still be heard, so distinctly that a chance visitor one afternoon assumed it came from some guest in the house.

This side of Rossetti, this anguish of a soul torn two ways and bowed down with remorse and dread, is not irrelevant to the understanding of his poetry. For the intensity of his work is deepened by our sense of watching in the shadows of its background the tragedy, like Faust's, of a spirit face to face with self-sought perdition. It is, like Faust's, a thinking soul, overpowered by the beauty of the body; or perhaps a soul (despite that insistence on 'fundamental brainwork') which rather broods than thinks; obsessed by beauty and the decay of beauty, by passion and shame for passion, by the shadow of human love that time knits so strong, only to tear apart again.

> What man has bent o'er his son's sleep, to brood
> How that face shall watch his when cold he lies?
> Or thought as his own mother kissed his eyes
> Of what her kiss was when his father wooed?

He was himself the man to do it.

More indeed than most poets he seems a dreamer, whose dreams we share—

> Master of the murmuring courts,
> Where the shapes of sleep convene.

When Hardy turns back, as he so constantly does, to the past with its grey phantoms, it is, I feel, with waking eyes. His

sane, clear-sighted consciousness keeps always its control. It is not in dreams that he beholds his Hebrides. This makes his poetry less magical, yet more sympathetic; one respects and loves its author more. There is something of the same difference between Coleridge and Wordsworth. It may seem natural to attribute the dream-quality of Coleridge and Rossetti to the opium of the one and the chloral of the other; but it is likelier that because they were by nature dreamers, they let themselves sink into that darker dreamworld of drugs.

Speculation about such things is at best fanciful, as yet, and over-simplified. But Rossetti seems, in fine, one who dwelt always too gladly in the world of the unconscious and of fantasy; who accordingly lacked the strong sense of reality to cope either with his divided passion for the ideal and for the sensual, or with the sense of guilt and remorse that grew from that division; and because he could not cope with them, sank deeper into a nightmare of conscience and suspicion and despair. From his despair comes that poignancy of atmosphere which is no small part of his power; and not unconnected with his dreaming, I think, is that gift for symbolism which is another of his gifts, as poet and as painter alike. Time as a pulse shaking feverishly across the Universe; unaccomplished destiny as a cold breath on Dante's forehead; lust as the toad within the stone; ships on a colourless, hopeless horizon as dead flies upon a wall; London street-lamps in their long receding curves as a fiery serpent for the harlot's heart; wasted days as wheat dropped in the clayey wayside or drops of life-blood staining guilty feet; sunset skies on the eve of battle as a world beyond to ride into; windy branches beating against the windows of a doomed king as the summoning hands of destiny; death as a cypress planted at our birth for each of us and growing with our growth—to hear or see or

feel things so concretely is typical of him even beyond the common lot of poets. He was not specially observant, painter and Pre-Raphaelite painter though he was, in the same way as Tennyson with his love of natural detail for its own sake. With Tennyson the background is apt to be more than the drama, the landscape than its figures. But with this Italian, as with Greek poetry, Nature however exquisitely or tragically drawn remains subordinate, a setting or a symbol for human feeling. *Then* he can be minute indeed, as in that marvellous creation of a stifling atmosphere at the opening of *The Bride's Prelude*, or when the Florentine exiles kneel for pardon on the steps of San Giovanni and their triumphant enemies thrust eager beards into the velvet hoods of those before them, as they crane their necks—

to see
The cinders stuck in the bare knee.

Perhaps the finest example of this simple yet powerful use of tiny detail to call up, almost to symbolize, intense feeling, is *The Woodspurge*:

The wind flapped loose, the wind was still,
Shaken out dead from tree and hill:
I had walked on at the wind's will,—
I sat now, for the wind was still.

Between my knees my forehead was,—
My lips, drawn in, said not Alas!
My hair was over in the grass,
My naked ears heard the day pass.

My eyes, wide open, had the run
Of some ten weeds to fix upon;
Among those few, out of the sun,
The woodspurge flowered, three cups in one.

From perfect grief there need not be
Wisdom or even memory:
One thing then learnt remains to me,—
The woodspurge has a cup of three.

With its deliberate monotony of rhyme and rhythm to convey, as in *The Blessed Damozel* and *The Burden of Nineveh* (though with a delicate difference in each case), the sense of an interminable lapse of time; with its hinted suggestion in the first verse that the wind itself, the very breath of life, has turned with a last undulation to a dead winding-sheet; with the clear-drawn Blake-like picture of despair in its second verse; with its quiet refusal at the end of any false comforts about the excellence of suffering and its recognition of that crowning irony of human agonies that what once seemed tragic can fade out into trivial forgetfulness and leave not 'a sadder and a wiser man', even, but only a pointless memory, such as this vision of a Trinity impotent to save, the woodspurge with its cup of three—in all these ways the poem seems to me one of the finest and most typical instances of Rossetti's use of poetry to build 'a moment's monument'.

Here, too, his style keeps the mean between the over-simple and the over-lush; into both of which he sometimes fell. When simpler than this, he is in danger of seeming a little artful; when grander, as in *The House of Life*, of failing to keep his height, and growing flatulent. It is fine to write

> A thicket hung with masks of mockery
> And watered with the wasteful warmth of tears;

and yet it is perilous to write too like Shakespeare, when one is not Shakespeare. And my impression of Rossetti's Sonnets (which has influenced the selection of them here given) is that they abound in magnificent quatrains, or octaves, or sestets; but not in perfect wholes.

As with his style, so with his poetic qualities in general. In his moments of sensuous luxuriance the touch of Italian floridity about him may become a little sickly and syrupy for