

*The Decadent Republic of Letters: Taste,  
Politics, and Cosmopolitan Community from  
Baudelaire to Beardsley* by Matthew Potolsky

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Notes on Contributors

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ROSSETTI'S "PORTRAIT(S)":  
THREE NEW DRAFTS OF A ROSSETTI POEM

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Three hitherto unknown drafts of Dante Rossetti's "On Mary's Portrait" (later "The Portrait"),<sup>1</sup> recently acquired by the Mark Samuels Lasner Collection at the University of Delaware Library,<sup>2</sup> raise a number of intriguing scholarly questions. The most obvious question is of their temporal placement among known extant drafts and trial printed copies marked for revisions (see Appendix 1: "List of Drafts and Suggested Sequence"), but others pique the eye in more immediate ways. What, for example, are we to make of the crossed-out title "~~On Jane's portrait which I painted six years ago,~~" or the word "Rubbish" scrawled in an unknown hand on what appears chronologically to be the second of the three ("Portrait in the Library [1]")? Or the fact that three stanzas have been excised from the first manuscript ("Portrait [A]") and added to the collection of loose folios which constitute the mostly later third manuscript ("Portrait in Library [2]"), as well as the obsolete stanza numeration imposed on that third manuscript?

Added to the already known manuscript drafts, printed trial copies marked for revisions, and the final 1870/1881 version, the 'new' versions of the poem fill out ten stages of its development and furnish a palimpsest of evolving style and interwoven revisions, from an early stage in which the poet focused on specific recollections to a final version, composed two decades later, which evokes a sense of loss consoled by art, dream, and wistful memory.<sup>3</sup>

Rossetti had published *The Early Italian Poets* (a volume of Italian translations) in 1861, but the *Poems* constituted his first volume of original verse when it appeared in April 1870. Since the summer of 1869 he had devoted much of his time to its preparation, assembled a series of intermediary proofs and trial books as he revised, and in some instances corrected more than one copy of these intermediate versions. Trial proofs were prepared for him on or

about 20 August (the Penkill Proofs), 12 September (the A Proofs), 20 September (the A2 Proofs), and 3 October (the First Trial Book).<sup>4</sup> None of these trial proofs or volumes included versions of "On Mary's Portrait" or "The Portrait."

It is well known that Rossetti decided to recover the poetic manuscripts he had enclosed in his wife's coffin in 1862, and arranged for the exhumation of her remains and the retrieval of the manuscripts from the grave in October 1869. They were in his possession by 5 October 1869, and he began to prepare drafts of "Jenny," "A Last Confession," "Dante at Verona," "The Sea-Limits," "St. Luke the Evangelist," and "The Portrait" for possible publication.<sup>5</sup> In what follows we will consider whether one or more of these newly-available drafts of "The Portrait" may have been among the retrieved manuscripts, and integrate them into other extant versions of this work.

At acquisition, the three newly available drafts were arranged as follows: *first* "The Portrait in the Library" [with a prior title deleted – ~~On Jane's portrait~~ which I painted six years ago – and with "Rubbish" written near the top in a later hand], hereafter cited as "Library [1]"; *second* "The Portrait" [titled in a later hand], hereafter cited as "Portrait [A]"; and *third* "The Portrait in the Library," hereafter cited as "Library [2]." Despite this initial ordering, "Portrait [A]" almost certainly predates the other two.<sup>6</sup>

The editors of the Rossetti Archive have classified "On Mary's Portrait" (dated 1847-48) and "The Portrait" (1869-70) as two separate poems, since the latter almost entirely recasts the former.<sup>7</sup> In what follows, however, we will consider "Portrait [A]" as an earlier draft of "On Mary's Portrait"; "Library [1]" as a later, transitional draft which contained stanzas from later versions as well as its antecedent "On Mary's Portrait"; and "Library [2]" as a compilation of drafted stanzas, some later discarded, and others prototypes of the first proofs printed after the opening of Elizabeth Siddal's grave. In keeping with this conjectural sequence, we will consider the drafts and versions in this order.

Rossetti originally wrote the 17 stanzas of this autograph of "The Portrait [A]" on six folios measuring 17.9 cm x 11 cm, drafted in what seems the poet's early hand, though three stanzas have been neatly excised and placed in the collection of loose small leaves which comprises "Library [2]" (see Appendix 2 for "Portrait [A]"). In the manner of "Ave," "My Sister's Sleep," and other poems associated with *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, painted in 1849, the poem is marked by its references to the speaker's reading habits, his mother's presence, and a relatively extensive portrait in words of his deceased beloved. Only two stanzas of this draft (folio 2, stanza 4, and folio 5, stanza 14, both excised) offered clear antecedents for any of the 12 stanzas of

the published 1870 "The Portrait," however, and only a few lines survived into succeeding versions. An echo of "In Memoriam" (11.20) may be found in stanza 15 of "Portrait [A]" – "O heart that neither beats nor heaves / In that one darkness lying still" – and the second stanza's mixture of condescension and unconscious sexism ("For she read seldom. She possessed / The woman's placid sense of thought, / Clearer than poetry," "Portrait [A]" [stanza 2]) was absent in its extant successors.

Cast as a dramatic monologue, "Portrait [A]" might at times be viewed as a less-developed variant of one of Robert Browning's monologues spoken by artists or nostalgic older men ("Fra Lippo Lippi," "My Last Duchess," "A Toccata of Galuppi's"). Stanza 4 begins, "But I have finished. What you know / Is all"; in stanza 7 the speaker continues, "Ah yes, the portrait! – You shall hear / Of how I painted it"; in stanza 13 he adds, "I have fancied that the things / I tell you of ..."; but in stanza 15 the poet's reflections on death verge on inner monologue: "In that one darkness lying still, / What now to *thee* my love's great will" [my emphasis].

"The Portrait [A]" also anticipates at least to some degree the poem's later narrative sequence of memory/portrait/death. The poem begins with recollections of his beloved, a girlish presence who had kept a pet fawn, hurried through the room, embroidered together with his mother, and found most books rather boring ("she'd laugh and ask / How many pages made a yawn?" st. 1), but has since become a "guardian angel," a possible anticipation of the final version's "All angels lay their wings to rest" (*Poems*, line 94).

The speaker also remembers a day when he had worked at the beloved's portrait *en plein air* ("as I wrought we talked," st. 15), and read to her from Dante's "Vita Nuova," translating *extempore* the original text into English, after which she delicately laid a flower in his book – a scene which evokes the Paolo and Francesca episode of canto V of *The Divine Comedy* which Rossetti painted as a watercolour in 1855, as well as *The Story of Rimini* (1816) by Leigh Hunt, one of Rossetti's favourite authors.

The poem's most striking parallel with a later draft may appear in Mary's response to his portrait of her: "The sweet face fell into my breast, / And abode there, as there at rest, / And with grave eyes looked up to me" ("Portrait [A]" st. 16). These lines are revised as "Her sweet face fell into my breast, / And remained, knowing its own nest,<sup>8</sup> / And with grave eyes looked up to me" in "On Mary's Portrait" (st. 15) but are absent in "Library [1]."

In Rossetti's characteristic search for religious metaphors for erotic love, the beloved in "Portrait [A]" is also described as having experienced an annunciation, and in stanza 11 her lover imagines a Dantean scene in which the saints view each "soul as it mounts nakedly" (compare "The Blessed Damozel," in which the "souls mounting up to God / Went by [the damozel]

like thin flames," 41-42). The speaker continues to paint in the poem's outdoor setting until "Ere many days, the portrait stood / Complete" ("Portrait [A]," st. 16), and its last two stanzas blend his mother's approval of his choice ("My mother smiled and sighed / To find the cradle she had loved / To her son's manhood yield a bride," st. 16), with the unexpected reflection that Mary's "heart was thanking God / Because I should be less alone" (st. 17) (perhaps because her portrait would console him?). Projection of loss onto a lover who grieves on the speaker's behalf is the *donnée* of "The Blessed Damozel," but, despite several attractive descriptions, the draft's shifting references fail to cohere in a unified tone of grief.

The single-stanza fragment of "On Mary's Portrait," held at Duke University Library, does not match any of the stanzas from "On Mary's Portrait, Which I Painted Six Years Ago," examined below, but it does constitute an alternate draft for "Portrait [A]," st. 11. It is unclear which came earlier, but a case can be made for the priority of the fragment.

Its fourth line, for example, has a correction ("~~And once, when in the~~ \And often as/ this foreign tune") which appears in the corrected form in "Portrait [A]" ("~~And often as/ the foreign tongue~~"), and in the fragment ("And often as this foreign \tune Perplext her,/ and I must impart The sense") may anticipate "Portrait [A]"'s "And often as the foreign \tongue Seemed dubious/, and I must impart The sense." The fragment is also more explicit: "I kissed her, & she did not chide."

"On Mary's Portrait, which I painted six years ago," also in the holdings of Duke University Library and dated 1847-48,<sup>9</sup> marks a noticeable advance in narrative clarity and expression. Its 16 stanzas converge towards the phrasing of the poem's final form, though direct correspondences of similar lines occur only in stanzas 1, 2, and 3. In stanza 2, for example, the speaker muses:

It seems to me unnatural  
And a thing much to wonder on,  
As though mine image in the glass  
Should tarry when myself am gone.

Similarly, the final version of "The Portrait" begins:

This is her picture as she was:  
It seems a thing to wonder on,  
As though mine image in the glass  
Should tarry when myself am gone. (*Poems* [1870] 1-4)

The Rossetti Archive commentator notes that "On Mary's Portrait" may have been intended to accompany or be inserted in the unfinished early prose tale "St. Agnes of Intercession," and also suggests that the manuscript was used as a basis for Rossetti's revisions for "The Portrait" (though other manuscripts may also have been used for this purpose, as we will see). In addition, "On Mary's Portrait" may have drawn on a no-longer extant earlier draft, or may have been modified from an earlier revision of the fragment stanza and "Portrait [A]."

As we have it, "On Mary's Portrait," like its companions, records an epiphanic moment prior to the painting of the beloved's portrait. The speaker considers a superposition of life and death, imagines that his love's "shut senses" may "half unclose / Being part of Nature" (st. 6), and hopes that beyond a world now dead to him may lie the soothing waters of Lethe, an image central to "The One Hope," the final sonnet of *The House of Life*:

Do you not think  
That when the world shelves to the brink  
Of that long stream whose waters flow  
Hence some strange whither, I may now  
Kneel, and stoop in my mouth, and drink? ("On Mary's Portrait," st. 16)

In stanza 7, Rossetti proposes another epiphanic source of insight: that

sometimes the mind receives  
At such a moment that deep lore  
Which wise men have toiled vainly for; –  
There comes a sudden voice that saith  
Only one word, taking the breath;  
And a hand pusheth ope the door.

Compare Matthew Arnold's later central image in "The Buried Life" (1852):

Only – but this is rare –  
When a beloved hand is laid in ours,  
When, jaded with the rush and glare  
Of the interminable hours,  
Our eyes can in another's eyes read clear,  
When our world-deafen'd ear  
Is by the tones of a loved voice caress'd –  
A bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast,  
And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again. (77-85)<sup>10</sup>

Since "On Mary's Portrait" comprised 16 stanzas, as compared to the 12 of

“The Portrait,” and five entirely new stanzas were added to recast the poem’s conclusion in 1869, it follows that most of the stanzas of “On Mary’s Portrait” never appeared in print. Among these discarded verses is the following passage, reminiscent of the diction and settings of Keats’s early poems:

I mind the time I painted it.  
 Drinking in Keats – or Hunt mayhap, –  
 Half down a yellow dell, warm, soft  
 And hollowed, like a lady’s lap,  
 (A golden cup of summer-heat  
 She called it once) I lay: my feet  
 Covered in the high grass. (st. 5)

Discarded as well are the most explicitly physical lines:

But I remember that we found  
 Very few words, and that our hair  
 Had to be untangled as we rose. (st. 13).

The ten pages (five folios) of “The Portrait in the Library [1],” written on the recto and verso of unwatermarked paper, 20.5 cm x 16 cm, incorporate not only stanzas from “On Mary’s Portrait” – as might be expected – but also previously discarded lines from “Portrait [A]” as well. Twelve of “Library [1]”’s 20 stanzas have been crossed out, and someone, perhaps Rossetti, has also added upside-down numbers apparently unrelated to the stanza numbering at the bottom of folio 4 recto, after stanza 14. In addition, two large ink blots occur after stanzas 12 and 14, and folio 4, recto and verso, is marred by a large tear or hole at the centre margin; however, no small holes which might indicate that these pages had once been inserted in a notebook are present, diminishing the likelihood that “Library [1]” was included in the notebook of Rossetti’s poems placed in Siddal’s grave.

The epithet “Rubbish” mentioned earlier is scrawled slantwise on the upper right-hand side of the text, and the original title, “On Jane’s Portrait which I painted six years ago,” has been crossed out by Rossetti and replaced with “The Portrait in the Library.” In the light of Rossetti’s later passion for Jane Morris, this proto-title may seem startling in a draft which might in principle have been written at any time between 1848 and 1869. However, William Michael Rossetti recorded in his diary for 1850 that his brother had written an early poem alternately called “Mary’s Portrait” or “Jane’s Portrait” for *Hodgepodge*, the family magazine, now unfortunately lost.<sup>11</sup>

“Library [1]” is an amalgam of lines from “On Mary’s Portrait,” “Portrait

[A],” and newly written material. Rather unexpectedly this draft shows greater indebtedness to the earlier “On Mary’s Portrait” than to the later “Portrait [A].” Rossetti retained in some form seven stanzas from “On Mary’s Portrait” (1-3, 6-9), but crossed out nine more stanzas (2-5, 10-12, 14-15) which had originally been retained, as well as a stanza which seems a blend of counterparts in “On Mary’s Portrait” and “Portrait [A]” (16). One stanza seems retained from “Portrait [A]” (17), but three newly composed ones have been deleted (13, 19, 20), leaving a diminished length of eight stanzas. Of these three new but deleted stanzas, one may have been omitted because of its sensuous descriptions –

Her flowing garments uncontroll’d  
 Were heaped round her: ’twixt fold and fold  
 Her great white arms lay; and the breath  
 Lifted her bosom underneath  
 [torn off] its rich lace-shelter, clasped with gold (f. 4, st. 13) –

and the other two stanzas (19, 20) evoke the motif of art’s spiritual power so central to the final versions:

Nay, though her image here were all –  
 I thank thee for this holy Art  
 Which, stronger than a priest, unites  
 Whom time and space would hold apart. (f. 5v, st. 20)

The “Library [2]” manuscript consists of a loose sheaf of 19 folios on paper similar to that of “Portrait [A]” and varying between 4.5 and 13.7 cm in height and 11.3 cm in width, giving the impression of a loose collection of small fragments. It is comprised of 23 stanzas and 4 orphaned lines, with 16 stanzas marked in large numerals 1 through 16, and “Back of page 7” is tagged onto one folio in a large hand, likely Rossetti’s. Three stanzas of “Library [2]” were originally part of “Portrait [A]” but have been neatly excised and inserted in the new collection (“Library [2]” folio 3, st. 4; folio 5, st. 6; and folio 12, st. 14). In all, this compilation of fragments seems intended as an aid in preparing a new version.

Since, as mentioned, the final version of “The Portrait” has only 12 stanzas, this superimposed numeration was provisional, but it was at least superior to the random ordering of leaves in the original manuscript, and we have used this sequence for our transcription. One stanza restored stanza 20 of “Library [1],” eight were apparently new, and five others correspond roughly to counterparts in “On Mary’s Portrait” (and in some cases, to both “On Mary’s Portrait” and “Library [1]”). Appendix 4 provides the text of the

numbered and unnumbered stanzas of "Library [2]."

A brief review of the new stanzas of "Library [2]" will adumbrate their shift from literal memories to symbolic dreamscapes. In these the speaker wanders in a reverie through the night, revisits the scene of the lovers' earlier epiphanic tryst, and assumes the role of pilgrim beside the tomb of their shared love:

Yet also here, when I have sat  
From noon until the day's decline,  
It has grown awful through the room  
As it must be in Palestine, –  
Calmer, more solemn, holier:  
Till hopes and aims, long lost with her,  
Stood round her image, side by side,  
Like tombs of pilgrims that have died,  
About the Holy Sepulchre. (f. 14; st. 17)

As mentioned, "Library [2]" contains three stanzas excised from "Portrait [A]," confirming an early composition for these three at least, and suggesting that others of its 23 stanzas may have already been composed at various periods. Yet in whole or part, "Library [2]" also seems a direct literary antecedent of the Fitzwilliam Post-Exhumation Proofs version of circa 30 October 1869, which slightly refines the wording of "Library [2]"'s new stanzas. Were the stanzas of "Library [2]" written considerably earlier—in the late 1850s or early 1860s, for example, and if so, were they placed in the grave along with "Library [1]"? Were at least some of the stanzas of "Library [2]" drafted in the later 1860s as potential replacements of or complements to the drafts Rossetti had lost? Or finally, in view of the resemblance of several stanzas of "Library [2]" to the Fitzwilliam Post-Exhumation Proofs, were several of these new verses which Rossetti composed in October 1869?

The retention in "The Portrait" of many stanzas which appeared for the first time in "Library [2]" raises another obvious question: did this autograph precede or follow the Fitzwilliam Post-Exhumation Proofs of circa 30 October 1869 and the Ashmolean fair copies of newly written stanzas, also from 1869? In both cases, "Library [2]" seemingly provided source texts for several later stanzas.

In the Fitzwilliam 1869 Post-Exhumation Proofs (the first proofs known to have been printed based on manuscripts taken from the grave) six "Library [2]" stanzas appear in apparently revised form (numbered stanzas 3, 5, 8, 13, 15, and 16).

For example, numbered stanza 3 of "Library [2]" reads:

[after deletions] 'Tis painted here as once she stood  
Outstepping from a grove. At least,  
The movement of her hands was so  
And so the carriage of her waist.  
Yet fair to you the type may seem,  
Unknown the substance and the dream.  
'Tis she: though of herself, alas!  
Less than her shadow on the grass  
Or than her image in the stream. (f. 2)

In the Fitzwilliam 1869 Post-Exhumation Proofs this passage has become (with the relevant changes in bold type):

**Thus** was the movement of her hands  
And **thus** the carriage of her waist.  
**And passing** fair the type **must** seem,  
Unknown the **presence** and the dream.  
'Tis she: though of herself, alas!  
Less than her shadow on the grass,  
Or than her image in the stream. (1869 proofs, p. 40, ll. 21-27)

Notice in particular the modulations from the earlier lines "Unknown the substance and the dream" to "Unknown the presence and the dream," and "Yet fair to you the type may seem" (retaining the earlier convention of a dramatic auditor) to "And passing fair the type must seem."

Other deft modifications occur in numbered stanza 16, an early version of the stanza which closes the 1870 version. In "Library [2]" this had read:

Yet also here, when I have sat  
From noon until the day's decline,  
It has grown awful through the room,  
As it must be in Palestine, –  
Calmer, more solemn, holier:  
Till hopes and aims, long lost with her,  
Stood round her image, side by side,  
Like tombs of pilgrims that have died,  
About the Holy Sepulchre. (f. 14)

The initial changes in the Fitzwilliam proofs were strikingly effective:

**Here with her face doth memory sit**  
**Meanwhile, and wait** the day's decline,  
**Till other eyes shall look from it,**

Eyes of the spirit's Palestine,  
 Even than the old gaze tenderer:  
 While hopes and aims long lost with her  
 Stand round her image side by side,  
 Like tombs of pilgrims that have died  
 About the Holy Sepulchre. (st. 7; but st. 12 in "The Portrait," *Poems*  
 [1870], 100-08)

The revised version strengthens the earlier claim – that the portrait evokes a sense of solemnity – to conjecture that “tenderer” eyes than those of his physical beloved look down from “eyes of the spirit’s Palestine,” as the viewer merges his desires with those projected onto her image. Not surprisingly this subtle wording was preserved intact into the final 1870 version.

Numbered stanzas 9 and 10 (folios 8 and 9) and a quatrain of numbered stanza 4 (folio 3) in “Library [2],” which did *not* find their way into the Fitzwilliam Post-Exhumation Proofs, did appear in the final 1870/1881 *Poems*. In “Library [2],” numbered stanza 10 had read:

Next day, the memories of these things,  
 As leaves through which a bird has flown,  
 Still vibrated; and then I thought  
 That I would make them all my own,  
 And paint this picture. So, to please  
 My whim, on sultrier days than these,  
 She stood among the plants that bloom  
 At windows of our dining room,  
 To feign the shadow of the trees. (f. 9)

Several wordings were altered to form stanza 7 of the published 1870/1881 *Poems*:

Next day the memories of these things,  
 Like leaves through which a bird has flown,  
 Still vibrated with Love's warm wings;  
 Till I must make them all my own  
 And paint this picture. So, 'twixt ease  
 Of talk and sweet long silences,  
 She stood among the plants in bloom  
 At windows of a summer room,  
 To feign the shadow of the trees. (55-63)

Gone is “to please my whim, on sultrier days than these,” in favour of “'twixt

ease / Of talk and sweet long silences,” and the mundane “dining room” has become “a summer room,” suggestive of the natural setting of the lovers’ tryst.

The Ashmolean Museum houses a manuscript draft of four stanzas not present in the 1869 Fitzwilliam Post-Exhumation Proofs, of which three are anticipated in “Library [2]” (numbered stanzas 9, 10, and 14; folios 8, 9, and 13). Numbered stanza 14 of “Library [2],” for example, reads:

Your pardon. For this sounds, I think,  
 Not reverent, heard in daylight here  
~~And said thus loudly [two illegible words]~~  
 Only in solemn whispers dull [?][two illegible words] I had  
 At night-time ~~this has~~ these things reached mine ear;  
 When the leaf-shadows, at a breath,  
~~Shrank~~ Shrink in the road, and all the heath,  
 Forest, and water, far and wide,  
 In limpid starlight glorified,  
~~Lay~~ Lie like the mystery of death. (f. 13)

In the fourth stanza of the Ashmolean draft this becomes the dignified:

For now doth daylight disavow  
 Those days, – nought left to see or hear.  
 Only in solemn whispers now  
 At night-time these things reach mine ear;  
 When the leaf-shadows at a breath  
 Shrink in the road, and all the heath,  
 Forest and water, far and wide,  
 In limpid starlight glorified,  
 Lie like the mystery of death.<sup>12</sup>

Clearly this Ashmolean fragment is based on “Library [2]” or other un-preserved or missing versions derived from it.

### Conclusion

In the absence of clear biographical corroboration, it is unlikely that we may ever know the exact provenance of these three drafts, but they may roughly and conjecturally be dated as follows: “Portrait [A]” from 1847, “Library [1]” from an indeterminate time after “Portrait [A]” but prior to 1869, and “Library [2],” a compilation including three stanzas from the early “Portrait [A],” at least partly from the exhumation year of 1869.

An unexplained torn hole exists in "Library [1]," the less readily dated middle draft, and it is remotely possible that "Portrait [A]" and "Library [1]," written in earlier variants of Rossetti's handwriting, may have lain in the coffin from 1862 through 1869.<sup>13</sup> Rossetti reworked "The Portrait" several times during October and November 1869, as remarked earlier, and several leaves from "The Portrait in the Library [2]" may be the earliest known draft from this period. At the very least, "Library [2]"'s character as a worked-over composite of earlier texts suggests that it may have been a near successor of the relevant 'exhumation manuscript,' if not the manuscript itself; and that in it Rossetti may have integrated new work with other texts from an earlier period which remained in his possession.

In a different and more literary register, "Library [2]"'s existence, alternate discarded stanzas, and significant improvements over earlier versions testify to the tenacious intensity of Rossetti's efforts at revision at every stage of his career, as well as to the many intriguing paths he decided not to take. The ten known versions of "On Mary's Portrait"/"The Portrait" may not fully map the entire sequence of its revisions, but they adumbrate some of the ways in which Rossetti's youthful reveries in "The Portrait [A]" evolved into "The Portrait"'s exploration of yearning, desolation, and irremediable loss.

### Notes

1. This same title should not be confused with Sonnet 10, "The Portrait," from *The House of Life*.
2. Acquired by the Mark Samuels Lasner Collection, on loan to the University of Delaware Library, at the Bonhams, London, auction sale of the Roy Davids Collection, Part II, 29 March 2011, lot 190. Davids had purchased the manuscripts from Maggs Brothers, the London booksellers, some years earlier.
3. We are indebted to Ashley Rye of the University of Delaware for providing information on these manuscripts, to Michelle Taylor of the University of Iowa for checking the manuscript, and to her and to Laura Kilbride, former Pre-Raphaelite Fellow at the University of Delaware Library, for suggestions on an initial draft of this essay.
4. For the composition and printing history of the 1870 *Poems*, see the Rossetti Archive, 1870 *Poems*, [www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/1-1870.raw.html](http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/1-1870.raw.html). An account of the exhumation appears in Jan Marsh, 368-69, 374-78, and *The Correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: The Chelsea Years, 1863-72: Prelude to Crisis*, vol. 4, 1868-1870, ed. William E. Fredeman et al, letters for 1869, nos. 147, 157, 158, 164, 178, 181, 183, 190, and 191. Rossetti wrote a letter of application to Henry Bruce, the Home Secretary, petitioning for the opening of the grave (which legally belonged to Frances Rossetti), and on 16 September 1869, the license for exhumation was signed. Charles Howell, a lawyer H. V. Tebbs, and a doctor, Llewellyn Williams, were present at the disinterment on 5 October. For the trial books, see Roger Lewis, *Thomas James Wise and the Trial Book Fallacy*.
5. A November 1869 non-autograph ms. of "Jenny" is preserved in the Fitzwilliam Library,

and October 1869 autograph mss. of "A Last Confession" are preserved in the Princeton and Fitzwilliam Libraries.

6. "Portrait [A]" has a watermark of an undiscernible date; "Library [1]" has no watermark; some fragments of "Library [2]" display parts of a watermark, and one folio has an 1858 watermark. "Portrait [A]" and all but one of the fragments in "Library [2]" are on the same-sized paper.
7. See [www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/raw.html](http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/raw.html). For a discussion of the relationship of the two manuscripts, see Paul Baum 26-33, 67-71.
8. Possibly "nest" should read "rest," as in the later manuscripts.
9. According to Baum, the ms. is 6 3/8 x 8 1/8 inches (16.2 cm. x 20.6 cm., and thus different in size than "Portrait [A]" (17.9 x 11 cm).
10. Since the poem's ascribed dating is 1847-48, there may be other explanations for this resemblance than Arnoldian influence.
11. "On Mary's Portrait," Rossetti Archive, [www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/5-1847.raw.html](http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/5-1847.raw.html). Rossetti met Jane Burden in 1857.
12. Unexpectedly, the Ashmolean st. 3 is a throwback to "Portrait [A]," st. 15, with both versions containing these two lines: "It seems each sun-thrilled blossom there / Beat like a heart among the leaves."
13. On the other hand, other supposed exhumation manuscripts, for example, that of "Another Love," with damage along the top of the manuscript, bear little resemblance to "Portrait [A]" and "Library [1]" (private correspondence, Laura Kilbride, 15 August 2013). Also, as mentioned above, "Library [1]" lacks the small apertures which might indicate it had been removed from a notebook.

### Works Cited

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### Appendix 1: List of Drafts and Suggested Sequence

1. Fragment of "On Mary's Portrait." Duke University Library. [[www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/3-1843.raw.html](http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/3-1843.raw.html)]
2. "The Portrait." Title added, possibly not in Rossetti's hand. Composed perhaps c. 1847 [MSL Collection MS.] Cited here as "Portrait [A]."
3. "On Mary's Portrait, which I painted six years ago." 1847-48; Duke University Library [[www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/1-1847.raw.html](http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/1-1847.raw.html)]
4. "The Portrait in the Library" [1]. Composed before 1869 [MSL Collection MS]. Cited here as "Library [1]."

5. "The Portrait in the Library" [2]. Possibly 1869; before 30 October 1869. [MSL Collection MS.] Cited here as "Library [2]." Includes stanzas from "Portrait [A]."
6. "The Portrait." Exhumation Proofs, October 1869. Fitzwilliam Library. Includes additional material resembling a further draft. [www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/poemssonnets/fizms.rad.html#p1 and html#p4r.html].
7. "The Portrait." Fair copy of additional stanzas late 1869. Ashmolean Library. [www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/50-1869.ashmolms.rad.html#p1].
8. "The Portrait." Second Trial Book 26 November 1869. [www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/1-1870.tb2.raw.html].
9. "The Portrait," *Poems*. London: F.S. Ellis, 1870.
10. "The Portrait." *Poems*. London: Ellis and White, 1881.

## Appendix 2: "Portrait [A]"

### The Portrait

[Title not necessarily in Rossetti's hand]

How she would hurry through this room,  
And running pause beside my chair  
Over my volume, while her dog,  
Would leap the sill and bark for her,  
Or, tinkling with its bell, her fawn  
Looked in. Then, stepping on the lawn  
To join my mother at their task  
Of tambour-work, she'd laugh and ask  
How many pages made a yawn?

For she read seldom. She possessed  
The woman's placid sense of thought,  
Clearer than poetry. Her soul  
As calmly to each influence wrought  
As eye or ear to hue or tone.  
She needed not man's word. Alone  
At the one Voice her life upstrang;  
The chord to which the spirit sang  
In the chaste body, purely grown.

But for my part, in all I read  
I found her. She revealed to me  
Cordelia's sorrow, and those years  
Of desolate Penelope: –  
All highest truth in human song: –  
Better than notes a volume long  
Expounding gracious Beatrice;  
The very blessing, and the peace  
Indeed, which made her Dante strong.

f. 2] [Stanza cut out and placed among scraps of "Library [2]" manuscript, where a numeral 4 is at top left]

Alas! 'tis but the thin-drawn ray  
That makes the prison-depths more rude, –  
The drip of water on the stones  
Giving a tongue to solitude:  
Yet is the portrait dear: it tries  
To keep her image otherwise  
Than when her grief for mine, in league  
With constant pain's intense fatigue,  
Made the soul quail within her eyes.

But I have finished. What you know  
Is all: – the tale of hopes now fled  
Beyond recall of prayer – beyond  
Thessalian magic, which the dead  
Heard and arose. She may not come  
But she waits always in a home  
Kept fair and still, which I one day  
Shall win to, though upon the way  
The heavy air be burthensome.

Oh! When I wake, bewildered yet  
With death, and on the sudden see  
My guardian angel at my side,  
Truly I think it shall be she.  
Oh! constant vigil let her keep,  
My God! – lest there, – instead of deep  
Deep looks, wherein our spirits cleave, –  
She fold her brows, and, weeping, leave  
My soul that may not cease to weep.

[f. 3]... Ah yes, the portrait! – You shall hear  
Of how I painted it, and how  
Among these branches: – as you say.  
Perhaps a fitter subject now.  
Past yonder fields. .... nay, 'tis not seen  
This summer, for the trees between  
But late in autumn, when more sky  
Peeps daily through the boughs, your eye  
Might reach from here the place I mean.

It was the summer then; three years, –  
Four years ago. There is a dell  
Yonder, that I will show you, where  
I lay one day, as oft, to dwell  
O'er Dante's love, the grief and hope.  
I read, and was at rest. The cope  
Of naked heaven was hung with heat  
As with a veil: beneath my feet  
The shadow laughed about the slope[.]

[Stanza at bottom of folio cut out and placed among scraps of "Library [2]" manuscript, with numeral 6 at top left]

~~When~~ \So/ in the trees the breeze would \did/  
stir.

I am fain to think – as spring comes back,  
Leaving, along the path it treads,  
A brightness like a swan's bright track, –  
That some such quickening warmth may  
creep  
About her in her heavy sleep;  
Till her shut senses half unclose,  
Being part of nature, and she knows  
What time one cometh there to weep.

[f. 4] At length we rested; and my soul,  
As she sat down, cried at her feet.  
Then, taking thought, I oped my book,  
And drew forth music clear and sweet [no  
indentation: forgotten]  
From that New Life<sup>x</sup> of love, – a tune  
Like the pathetic pulse of June.  
She listened as I read. 'Mid these,  
Of its own voice the responses,  
I felt my breathless spirit swoon.

And often as the foreign tongue  
Seemed dubious, and I must impart  
The sense, there English words of love

Quaked like a flame about my heart.  
But in her face I dared not look;  
Nor then the bitter meaning took,  
When, at the sacred page where he  
That angel draws for memory,  
She laid a flower within the book –

x The reader need scarcely be reminded that the "Vita Nuova" of Dante is the history of his early love for Beatrice.

[f. 5] Nay, to mine heart her heart well nigh  
Interpreted that solemn pause  
When Mary heard her name, and gazed  
Troubled, not knowing what it was,  
That moment when, upon God's word,  
Her soul accepted the sharp sword  
(Made known at once, beneath the wing  
The Spirit's overshadowing.)  
And said, "Behold thy handmaid, Lord."

And I have fancied that the things  
I tell you of, where now she is  
May touch the unknown Saints, and move  
Even them to dearer sympathies:  
For where from heaven they watch and see  
Each soul as it mounts nakedly,  
None ever can have seemed less strange  
Than hers, or less have needed change  
Through death, to join that company.

[Stanza at bottom folio cut out and placed with "Library [2]" scraps, with numeral 13 at top left and small 13 at bottom right.]  
Ah! there where in the inner Heaven

The ecstasy broods holiest,  
And round the secret of the Light  
All angels lay their wings to rest, –  
How stood her spirit hushed and awed,  
When, having borne its joy abroad  
Throughout the music of the suns,  
It came into that place at once,  
And knew the silence there for God?

[f. 6] And as I wrought, we talked. And when  
I paused and lay back on my chair,  
In the sick burthen of my love  
It seemed each sun-thrilled blossom there  
Beat like a heart among the leaves.



O heart that neither beats nor heaves,  
In that one darkness lying still,  
What now to thee my love's great will  
Or the fine web the sunshine weaves?

Ere many days, the portrait stood  
Complete. My mother smiled and sighed  
To find the cradle she had loved  
To her son's manhood yield a bride:  
While, bending back that it might see  
Its own fair presence perfectly,  
The sweet face fell into my breast,  
And abode there, as there at rest,  
And with grave eyes looked up to me:

Grave eyes, possess of their full peace,  
Like a young bird's whose song begins: –  
The look I told you of. – not seen  
Till then, but always with me since.  
I now believe that it was known  
Already unto her how soon  
She was to spread her wings abroad;  
And that her heart was thanking God  
Because I should be less alone.

### Appendix 3: "Library [1]"

The portrait in the library –  
Rubbish

On Jane's portrait  
which I painted six years ago

Why yes: she looks as then she looked;  
There is not any difference;  
She was even so on that old time  
Which has been here but is gone hence.  
Nay, gaze ~~hand~~, and ~~for~~/ she shall seem to stir;  
Till the greenth, looking shadier  
As her white arm parts it and cleaves,  
Does homage with its bowing leaves.  
And yet the earth is over her.

It seems to me unnatural;  
And ~~As~~ strange/ a thing much to wonder  
on,  
As though mine image in the glass

Should tarry when myself am gone.  
While her mere semblance (I would say)  
Has for its room, from May to May,  
The quiet sunwarm open lawn-built/ library  
Where her friends read and think, – is she  
In the dark always, ~~choked~~ deaf with clay?

[f. 1v] It is not often I can read  
When I sit here; for then her cheek  
Seems to lean on me, and her breath  
To make my stooping forehead weak  
Again; and I can feel again  
Her ~~very~~/ hand ~~on my hand~~ quickly lain  
~~Whenever~~ \On mine when/ I would turn the  
leaf,  
To bidding me wait for her; and brief  
And light, her laugh comes to me then.

[Stanza crossed out]  
So that I gaze round from my chair  
To see her portrait where it stands;  
As it could smile me strength, or hold  
Out patience to me with its hands.  
Alas! it hath no smile: the brow,  
Once joyous, is grown stately now;  
And if I look into the eyes  
I think they are quite calm and wise;  
For while the world moves, she knows how.

[f. 2, lightly crossed out]  
I mind the time I painted it.  
Drinking in Keats – or Hunt mayhap, –  
Half down a yellow dell, warm, soft  
And hollowed, like a lady's lap,  
(A golden cup of summer-heat  
She called it once) I lay: my feet  
Covered in the high grass. And through  
My soul the music went, and grew  
Solemn, and made my rest complete.

I was as calm as silence: I  
~~Do think~~, perchance, when  
\Do you not think, as/ Spring comes back,  
Leaving, along the path it treads,  
{Flowers} \A brightness/ like a water fowl's  
\swan's/ bright track, –  
That some such quiet \quickenings/ warmth  
may creep  
About her in her heavy sleep;

Till her shut sense half unclose,  
Being part of Nature, and she knows  
What time one cometh there to weep?

[f. 2v] So as I lay \sat there/ I put my book  
\down/  
~~Down~~ \My book/, with some grass between  
its leaves  
To mark the place; and slowly then lay back  
– ~~Fell back~~ \Slowly/: Some \At/ times the  
mind receives,  
In such a \single/ moment, ~~that deep lore~~  
\more/  
~~Which wise men have toiled vainly for; –~~  
\Than nights & days heavy laboured for/  
There comes a sudden voice, ~~that~~ \which/  
saith  
Only one \a/ word, taking that \takes the/  
breath;  
And a hand pusheth ope \wide/ the door.

But my soul tottered, being drunk  
With that \day's/ sunshine in which ere its  
thoughts  
Floated \Flickered/ like atoms; and my feet  
Stumbled among the mystic courts  
Till I waxed weary, and did bend  
My spirit but to apprehend  
The beauty of things heard and seen –  
The water-noise, and the strong green,  
And the white distance without end.

[f. 3] Fronting \Before/ me was a shade of  
trees  
Through \Between/ whose thick-tops  
\growth/ the light ~~fell~~ ~~stole~~ \looked/ in  
Hardly at all; a covert place,  
Where you might think to find a din  
Of doubtful talk, and a live flame  
Wandering, and many a shape whose name  
Not itself knoweth, and ~~wet~~ ~~live~~ \old/ dew,  
And red-mouthed \silent/ damsels meeting  
you.

It was through those trees that she came.  
And lo! out of that [copse] she came.

[Stanza crossed out]  
Her hands were lifted to put back  
The branches from her path; her head,

With its long tresses gathered up,  
Looked cool and nymphlike in the shade  
That reached her waist; but the white dress  
Beneath was yellow with the press  
Of sunshine; and her soundless feet,  
Clogged by the weighing summer \in the  
grass by dense/ heat,  
~~Moved~~ with a languid heaviness.

[f. 3v] [Stanza crossed out]  
Hardly a moment in the ~~porch~~ arch  
Of that dim house-place of leaves she stood;  
Her face and shoulders, coming thence,  
Shook off the shadow like a hood.  
Then, as she walked past through the room,  
She saw where I was stretched; and down  
From the broad bosom's slope, her eyes  
Smiled to me in a kind surprise:  
She came near with her rustling gown.

[Stanza lightly crossed out]  
(So, along some soft bank in Heaven,  
Mary the Virgin, going by,  
Seeth her servant Rafael  
Laid in warm silence happily;  
Being but a little comelier  
Since he hath reached the eternal year.  
She smiles; and he, as though she spoke.  
Feels thanked; and from his lifted tocque  
His curls fall as he bends to her.)  
[Large ink blot at bottom]

[f. 4] [Large hole in folio; stanza crossed out]  
She sat down where the grass was deep:  
Nothing she said, – perhaps her heart  
Was all too full o' the sun. I felt  
Quite hushed and thoughtful, for my part.  
Her flowing garments uncontroll'd  
Were heaped round her: 'twixt fold and fold  
Her great white arms lay; and the breath  
Lifted her bosom underneath  
[torn off] Its rich lace-shelter, clasped with  
gold.

[Torn off; stanza crossed out]  
time we sat there, who shall say?  
There was no time while we sat there.  
But I remember that we found  
Very few words, and that our hair

Had to be untangled when we rose.  
The day was burning to its close:  
This side and that, like molten walls  
The skies stood round; at intervals  
Swept with long weary flights of crows.

[Large ink blot and upside-down, crossed-out numbers, possibly added later:  
89/449 (5

445][f. 4v] [Large hole; stanza crossed out]  
Early the morrow morn, I went  
Full of most noble memories  
Unto my task; and painted her  
Outstepping from the cloistered trees.  
I moved not till the work was grand,  
Whole, and complete. You understand  
I mean my thought was all express'd  
At that first painting: for the rest –  
Mere matters of the eye and hand.

~~Here being finished, I showed her  
Ere many days the portrait stood,  
What I had done, and when she saw  
Complete. My mother smiled and sighed,  
Herself there, opposite herself  
To find the cradle she had loved,  
She marvelled with a kind of awe.~~

To her son's manhood yield a bride/  
And Which/ bending \drawing/ back that it  
might see  
The whole great figure \its own fair  
presence/ perfectly,  
Her \The/ sweet face fell into my breast,  
And remained, knowing its own rest, \abode  
stay there as then there at rest,  
And with grave eyes looked up to me:

[f. 5] Grave eyes, made holy with deep  
\possest of their full/ peace,  
Like a young bird's whose song begins: –  
The look I told you of; – not \un/seen  
Till then, but always with me since.  
I now believe that it was known  
Already unto he how soon  
She must \was to/ spread both her wings  
abroad;  
And that her heart was thanking God  
Because I should be less alone.

[Large hole; stanza crossed out]  
pardon, – I have wearied you;  
[hole] these things are cold and dead;  
[hole] look round, and see nought else  
[hole] Yea, Time weigheth like lead  
Upon my soul. Do you not think  
That where the world shelves to the brink  
Of that long stream whose waters flow  
Hence some strange whither, I may now  
~~Kneel, and stoop in my mouth,~~ \Lay my lips  
unto it, and drink?  
[Anticipates image of Sonnet 101, "The  
One Hope," of *The House of Life*]

[f. 5v] [Stanza crossed out]  
You see it can no more be mine,  
(As it was once it was \I hoped/ for a few  
years)  
While labouring towards the holy Art  
To sit with my cheek close to hers  
So that I felt the slow blush rise;  
Nor in her secrets to be wise;  
Nor when at night my work was done  
To have all this to think upon;  
Nor to learn in the hot noon \the lesson/ of  
her eyes

[Smaller script] Nay, though her image here  
were all –  
I thank thee for this holy Art  
Which, stronger than a priest, unites  
Whom time and space would hold apart.  
Nor then \Nought else,/ of all my love did  
prize,  
Remains; save what in mournful guise  
Abideth with my soul alone;  
And what is secret and unknown  
Below the earth, above the skies –

## Appendix 4: "Library [2]"

[This manuscript consists of 21 small leaves,  
possibly gathered in order to arrange them into  
a completed version; several stanza numbers  
are marked in a large black hand. Unnum-  
bered stanzas are placed at the end.]

[f. 1] The Portrait in the Library  
\Where through \the/ green the white arm  
cleaves/

[Stanzas 1 and 2 in large numerals. A per-  
pendicular line is drawn to the right of some  
stanzas. Lines inserted at the top around title,  
above the stanza, likely to replace the three  
deleted lines.]

\Till all their foliage (shadier  
~~As her white arm parts it & cleaves~~  
Does homage with its bowing leaves./  
Why yes: she looks as then she looked;  
There is not any difference;  
Even so she was, upon the time  
Which has been here but is gone hence  
Nay, gaze, for she shall seem to stir,  
As \twixt the birch and juniper  
Emerging gently gracious,  
The day when I beheld her thus  
And yet the earth is over her

It seems to me unnatural;  
As strange a thing to wonder on  
As though mine image in the glass  
Should tarry when myself am gone.  
While her mere semblance (I would say,  
Has for its home, from May to May,  
The open lawn built \summer open/ library  
Where her friends \I may/ read and think, is  
she .

In the dark always, deaf with clay.

[f. 1v] And still this picture brings to view  
Whose nights in daylight still return  
Whose sounds at night time [recall mine cry?]  
[doodle]

~~Ah! that such joy should~~  
And Yet doth this daylight disavow  
Those days – nought left to see or hear.

[f. 2; numeral 3 at top left and caret; per-  
pendicular line at right.]

~~Here is her picture. So I painted~~ \Tis painted  
as/ [two illegible words] here as once she  
stood as she met me once [?],  
Outstepping from the \a/ grove. At least,  
The movement of her hands was so  
And so the carriage of her waist.  
Yet fair to you the type may seem,  
Unknown the substance and the dream.  
'Tis she: though of herself, alas!  
Less than her shadow on the grass  
Or than her image in the stream.

[f. 3; large numeral 4 at top left; perpen-  
dicular line at right; stanza was excised from  
"Portrait [A]," folio 2, stanza 3]  
Alas! 'tis but the thin-drawn ray  
That makes the prison-depths more rude, –  
The drip of water on the stones  
Giving a tongue to solitude:  
Yet is the portrait dear: it tries  
To keep her image otherwise  
Than when her grief for mine, in league  
With constant pain's intense fatigue,  
Made the soul quail within her eyes.

[f. 4; large numeral 5 at top left]  
~~Before her~~ \All round her/ was a that shade  
of trees  
Between whose growth the light looked in  
Hardly at all; a covert place  
Where you might think to find a din  
Of doubtful talk, and a live flame  
Wandering, and many a shape whose name  
Not itself knoweth, and old dew,  
And silent damsels \people/ meeting you.  
And to \so/ out of that copse she came.

[f. 5; numeral 6 top left; mostly fair draft;  
stanza excised from "Portrait [A]" folio 3.]  
~~When~~ \So/ in the trees the breeze would \did/  
stir.

I am fain to think – as spring comes back,  
Leaving, along the path it treads,  
A brightness like a swan's bright track, –  
That some such \quickening/ warmth may  
creep  
About her in her heavy sleep;

Till her shut sense half unclose,  
Being part of Nature, and she knows  
What time one cometh there to weep.

[f. 6; numeral 7 with caret at top left]  
Scarcely a moment in the dusk  
And whispering porch of leaves, she stood,  
Before her shoulders suddenly  
Shook off the shadow like a hood,  
And her eyes dazzled: but her eyes,  
Another moment, maidenwise,  
(For she perceived me opposite)  
Drooped from her bosom to her feet, —  
Then shed on me a kind surprise.

[f. 6v; numeral 7 in light pencil at top; "back of #7" at bottom.]  
But my soul tottered, being drunk  
With that day's sunshine, when its thoughts  
Flickered like atoms; and my feet  
Stumbled among the mystic courts  
Till I waxt weary, and did bend  
My spirit but to apprehend  
The beauty of things heard and seen, —  
The water-course, and the great green,  
And the white distance without end.

[f. 7; numeral 8 at top left; fair copy.]  
That day we wandered, all the day  
One with the other all alone;  
And we were blithe; yet memory  
Saddens those hours, as when the moon  
Looks upon daylight. And with her  
I stooped to drink the spring-water,  
Athirst where other waters sprang;  
And where the echo is, she sang, —  
My soul another echo there.

[f. 8; numeral 9 at top left; perpendicular line at right.]  
And now, ~~while I~~, \while/ returning \home, I/  
spake  
The words whose silence wastes and kills,  
Dull rain-drops smote us, and anon  
Thundered the heat with the hills.  
That eve, at home, we sat again  
Beside the pelted window-pane;  
And there she hearkened what I said,  
With under-glances that surveyed

The empty pastures blind with rain.

[f. 9; numeral 10 at top left and smaller at bottom right; fair copy]  
Next day, the memories of these things,  
As leaves through which a bird has flown,  
Still vibrated; and then I thought  
That I would make them all my own,  
And paint this picture. So, to please  
My whim, on sultrier days than these,  
She stood among the plants that bloom  
At windows of our dining room,  
To feign the shadow of the trees.

[f. 10; numeral 11 at top left; fair copy.]  
It is not often I can read  
~~When I sit here~~, \More near that picture/ for  
~~then~~ her cheek  
Seems to lean on me, and her breath  
To make my stooping forehead weak  
Again; and I can feel again  
Her very hand so quickly lain  
On mine when it would turn the leaf,  
To bid me wait for her; and brief  
And light, her laugh comes to me then.

[f. 11; large numeral 12 at top left and at bottom right.]  
So that I gaze round from my chair  
To see her portrait where it stands;  
As it would smile me strength, or hold  
Out patience to me with its hands.  
Alas! it has no smile: the brow,  
Once joyous, is grown stately now;  
And if I look into the eyes  
I think they are quite calm & wise;  
For the world moves, & she knows how.

[f. 12; numeral 13 at top left and small 13 at bottom right; stanza excised from "Portrait [A]" folio 5; fair copy.]  
Ah! there where in the inner Heaven  
The ecstasy broods holiest,  
And round the secret of the Light  
All angels lay their wings to rest, —  
How stood her spirit hushed and awed,  
When, having borne its joy abroad  
Throughout the music of the suns,  
It came into that place at once,

And knew the silence there for God?

[f. 13; numeral 14 at top left, small 15 at bottom; perpendicular line at right.]  
Your pardon. For this sounds, I think,  
Not reverent, heard in daylight here  
~~And said thus loudly [two words illegible]~~  
~~\Only in solemn whispers only [illegible] yet I had/~~  
At night-time ~~this has~~ \these things/ reached  
mine ear;  
When the leaf-shadows, at a breath,  
~~Shrank~~ Shrank in the road, and all the heath,  
Forest, and water, far and wide,  
In limpid starlight glorified,  
~~Lay~~ Lie like the mystery of death.

[f. 14; numerals 15 and 16; perpendicular line at right.]  
Such thoughts were with me yestereve,  
And I delayed my sleep till dawn  
Still \in/ wandering. Then at last I wept:  
For unawares I came upon  
The sands where she would walk with me;  
And as I stood there suddenly,  
All wan with traversing the night, —  
Upon the desolate verge of light  
Yearned loud the iron-bosomed sea.

Yet also here, when I have sat  
From noon until the day's decline,  
It has grown awful through the room,  
As it must be in Palestine, —  
Calmer; more solemn, holier:  
Till hopes and aims, long lost with her,  
Stood round her image, side by side,  
Like tombs of pilgrims that have died,  
About the Holy Sepulchre.  
[Small numeral 16 lower right of page]

[f. 15; no numeral]  
Yet, Lord, thou know'st this shall not be.  
I, in her name and for her sake,  
Will leave her tomb beside the way,  
And journey with mine Art, and take  
High comfort. Holiest Comforter,  
Whose peaceful eyes with God confer, —  
To Thee, no need my grief be told;  
As a wise maiden known of old,

And who, with me, remembers her.

And though indeed this Art, long loved  
Not for her sake or in her name  
Alone, just gleam along my life  
~~—And thro' to death in shallow flame;~~  
~~\And die the death of wind & flame;/~~  
Yet for that I — aloof — where pour'd  
The throng — in silence — at a word —  
Have felt that yearning thrill complete  
To the least pulses of my feet: —  
For this I still may thank thee, Lord!

[f. 16; no numeral; fair copy]  
Nay, though her semblance here were all  
I gained, — I thank thee for mine Art,  
Which, stronger than a priest, unites  
Whom time and space would hold apart.  
Nought else, of all my love did prize,  
Remains; save what in mournful guise  
Takes counsel with my soul alone;  
Save what is secret and unknown,  
Below the earth, above the skies.

[f. 17; no numeral; mostly fair copy.]  
Yet sight or hearing less prevailed  
Than that third sense which could recall  
Yesterday's sunset, when with her  
I stood beside the garden-wall  
To count the clusters on the vine;  
While each low word that answered mine  
Fell vivid [illegible word crossed out] \as/ a  
falling star;  
Still brooding, prelude, afar,  
Like lutes in that noon-dream of mine.

[f. 18; no numeral; fair copy]  
I paused not till the solemn close;  
Nor heard till then, — subdued beneath  
Its spell. — The wind which drove the sky, —  
The trees which laboured in their breath. [no indentation]  
But when, in rising, we saw glide  
Along the awakened meadow-side  
That rapture of the windy grass, —  
I drew her towr'ds me where she was,  
And kissed her, and she did not chide.

[f. 19; no numeral; fair copy]

So, as I sat there, I put down  
My book, with grass between its leaves  
To mark the place, and then lay back  
Slowly. At times the mind receives,  
In such a single moment, more  
Than nights and days have laboured for:

There comes a sudden voice, — it saith  
Only a word, that takes the breath,  
And a hand pushes ope the door. [Image  
similar to one in Arnold's "The Buried  
Life"]

<sup>the portrait</sup>  
How she would hurry through this room,  
And running pause beside my chair  
Over my volume, while her dog  
Would leap the sill and bark for her,  
Or, tinkling with its bell, her favour  
Looked in: then, stepping on the lawn  
To join my mother at their task  
Of Tambour-work, she'd laugh and ask  
How many pages made a gown?

For she read seldom: she possessed  
The woman's placid sense of thought,  
Clearer than poetry. Her soul  
As calmly to each influence brought  
As eye or ear to hue or tone.  
She needed not man's word. Alone  
At the one voice her life upsprang;  
The chord to which the spirit sang  
In the chaste body, purely grown.

But for my part, in all I read  
I found her. She revealed to me  
Cordelia's sorrows, and those years  
Of desolate Penelope: —  
All highest truth in human song: —  
Better than notes a volume long  
Expounding gracious Beatrice;  
The very blessing, and the peace  
Indeed, which made her Dante strong.

Fig. 1. "The Portrait." Title added, possibly not in Rossetti's hand. Composed perhaps about 1847 [MSL Collection MS.]. Cited here as "Portrait [A]."

The portrait in the library —  
~~the portrait in the library~~  
which I painted six years ago

My eye: she looks as then she looked;  
There is not any difference;  
She was even so on that old time  
Which has been here but is gone hence.  
My gaze found, and she shall seem to stir,  
With other youths, looking shadowier  
As her white arm parts it and cleaves  
Over language with its bowing leaves  
And yet the earth is over her.

It seems to me unnatural;  
As if a thing which to wonder on,  
As though some image in the glass  
Should tarry when myself am gone.  
While her mere semblance (I would say)  
Has for its room, from May to May,  
The ~~old~~ <sup>little</sup> ~~room~~ <sup>book</sup> library  
Where her friends read and ~~time~~ <sup>time</sup> — in she  
In the dark always, ~~shaded~~ <sup>shaded</sup> with clay?  
Dust

Fig. 2. "The Portrait in the Library" [1]. Composed before 1869 [MSL Collection MS]. Cited here as "Library [1]."

