Three hitherto unknown drafts of Dante Rossetti’s “On Mary’s Portrait” (later “The Portrait”), recently acquired by the Mark Samuels Lasner Collection at the University of Delaware Library, 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.

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). None of these trial proofs or volumes included versions of “On Mary’s Portrait” or “The Portrait.”
Christina Rossetti - 1830-1894. Three sang of love together: one with lips Crimson, with cheeks and bosom in a glow, Flushed to the yellow hair and finger tips; And one there sang who soft and smooth as snow Bloomed like a tinted hyacinth at a show; And one was blue with famine after love, Who like a harpstring snapped rang harsh and low The burden of what. those were singing of. One shamed herself in love; one temperately Grew gross in soulless love, a sluggish wife; One famished died for love.Â Born in 1830 in London, Christina Rossetti, the author of Goblin Market and Other Poems, is a major Victorian Poet. More Christina Rossetti. sign up for poem-a-day. Receive a new poem in your inbox daily. Email Address. Sign Up. About This Poem. Christina Georgina Rossetti (5 December 1830 â€“ 29 December 1894) was an English poet who wrote various romantic, devotional, and children's poems. "Goblin Market" and "Remember" remain famous. She wrote the words of two Christmas carols well known in the UK: "In the Bleak Midwinter", later set by Gustav Holst and by Harold Darke, and "Love Came Down at Christmas", set by Harold Darke and by other composers. Rossettiâ€™s final volume, Verses, published when she was 63, contains the devotional poems she had previously included in three of her books of devotional prose, Time Flies, Called to be Saints and The Face of the Deep.Â The 6-line stanza of a Petrarchan sonnet, occupying the last six lines, sometimes divided into tercets or couplets.