

20 She never tasted such before,
 How should *it* cloy⁷ with length of use?
 She sucked and sucked and sucked the more
 Fruits which that unknown orchard bore;
 She sucked until her lips were sore⁸;
 Then flung the emptied rinds away
 But gathered up one kernel stone⁹,
 25 And knew not was it night or day
 As she turned home alone.
 (...)

it refers to...

2 Focus on the meaning. Underline the phrases that tell you that:

- 1 Laura is conscious of having lost an important part of herself
- 2 she is experiencing something unknown
- 3 her experience may have evil consequences.

3 Focus on the language. The poet uses comparisons, repetition, sensuous language and symbol to describe Laura's experience.

- a) What do the comparisons stress?
- b) What word is repeated? What aspect of Laura does it stress and how does it link with the adjective "sweet-tooth" in line 1?
- c) Which sense/s does the language appeal to?
- d) What do you think the goblins, the fruit and the kernel are symbols of?

■ The Woman and the Poet

Life and works

Christina Rossetti was Dante Gabriel's sister and the fourth child of a gifted family of Italian origin. Her father was an exiled Italian patriot. She was born in London in 1830. She shared her brother Dante's artistic interests and the Pre-Raphaelite taste for beautiful imagery and pictorial effect. Her love for the living world contrasted with her deep orthodox religiosity which even prevented her marriage to men whom she loved but did not share her religious faith. In her last years she led a very solitary life till her death in 1894.



C. L. Dogson, 1863

She began writing poetry at a very early age and published prose and poems in periodicals and journals. *Goblin Market and Other Poems* appeared in 1862 and was followed by other collections of poetry till 1896. *Time Flies, a Reading Diary* (1883) is a combination of prose and verse.

Main themes

Her religiosity created a deep conflict in Christina. The beauty of the sensuous world strongly appealed to her, but she felt it her duty to restrain her passions which she considered sinful. Many of her poems convey this struggle. The transience of material things is also a main theme in her poetry.

A Birthday

She used traditional metre with mastery and originality as she shows in *A Birthday*; in this poem the lines consist of four iambs, except where the imperatives are

7. cloy, cause nausea (nauseare).

8. sore, tender and painful (doloranti).

9. kernel stone, the hard core of fruit (nocciolo).