

Rossetti's *Maude: Prose and Verse* and a reference guide to the writings on Christina Rossetti.

BETTY S. FLOWERS is Professor of English and a member of the Academy of Distinguished Teachers at the University of Texas at Austin. She is a native Texan with degrees from the University of Texas and the University of London. Her publications include *Browning and the Modern Tradition* and *Extending the Shade* (poetry), and articles on Donald Barthelme, Adrienne Rich, Christina Rossetti, poetry therapy, writing, politics and myth, among other subjects. She has edited *Daughters and Fathers* (with Lynda Boose), as well as a number of television tie-in books and global scenarios.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

## The Complete Poems

Text by R. W. CRUMP

Notes and Introduction by BETTY S. FLOWERS

PENGUIN BOOKS

- 150 Warm dying loveliness brought near and low.  
 Each water drop made answer to the light,  
 Lit up a spark and showed the sun his face;  
 Soft purple shadows paved the grassy space  
 And crept from height to height,  
 155 From height to loftier height crept up apace.  
 While opposite the sun a gazing moon  
 Put on his glory for her coronet,  
 Kindling her luminous coldness to its noon,  
 As his great splendour set;  
 160 One only star made up her train as yet.  
 Each twig was tipped with gold, each leaf was edged  
 And veined with gold from the gold-flooded west;  
 Each mother-bird, and mate-bird, and unfledged  
 Nestling, and curious nest,  
 165 Displayed a gilded moss or beak or breast.  
 And filing peacefully between the trees,  
 Having the moon behind them, and the sun  
 Full in their meek mild faces, walked at ease  
 A homeward flock, at peace  
 170 With one another and with every one.  
 A patriarchal ram with tinkling bell  
 Led all his kin; sometimes one browsing sheep  
 Hung back a moment, or one lamb would leap  
 And frolic in a dell;  
 175 Yet still they kept together, journeying well,  
 And bleating, one or other, many or few,  
 Journeying together toward the sunlit west;  
 Mild face by face, and woolly breast by breast,  
 Patient, sun-brightened too,  
 180 Still journeying toward the sunset and their rest.

"ALL THY WORKS PRAISE THEE, O LORD."  
 A PROCESSIONAL OF CREATION.

## ALL.

I all-creation sing my song of praise  
 To God Who made me and vouchsafes my days,  
 And sends me forth by multitudinous ways.

## SERAPH.

- I, like my Brethren, burn eternally  
 5 With love of Him Who is Love, and loveth me;  
 The Holy, Holy, Holy Unity.

## CHERUB.

I, with my Brethren, gaze eternally  
 On Him Who is Wisdom, and Who knoweth me;  
 The Holy, Holy, Holy Trinity.

## ALL ANGELS.

- 10 We rule, we serve, we work, we store His treasure,  
 Whose vessels are we brimmed with strength and  
 pleasure;  
 Our joys fulfil, yea, overflow our measure.

## HEAVENS.

- We float before the Presence Infinite,  
 We cluster round the Throne in our delight,  
 15 Revolving and rejoicing in God's sight.

## FIRMAMENT.

I, blue and beautiful, and framed of air,  
 At sunrise and at sunset grow most fair;  
 His glory by my glories I declare.



POWERS.

20 We Powers are powers because He makes us strong;  
Wherefore we roll all rolling orbs along,  
We move all moving things, and sing our song.

SUN.

I blaze to Him in mine engarlanding  
Of rays, I flame His whole burnt-offering,  
While as a bridegroom I rejoice and sing.

MOON.

25 I follow, and am fair, and do His Will;  
Thro' all my changes I am faithful still,  
Full-orbed or strait His mandate to fulfil.

STARS.

30 We Star-hosts numerous, innumerable,  
Throng space with energy untumultuous,  
And work His Will Whose eye beholdeth us.

## GALAXIES AND NEBULAE.

No thing is far or near; and therefore we  
Float neither far nor near; but where we be  
Weave dances round the Throne perpetually.

COMETS AND METEORS.

Our lights dart here and there, whirl to and fro,  
35 We flash and vanish, we die down and glow;  
All doing His Will Who bids us do it so.

## SHOWERS.

We give ourselves; and be we great or small,  
Thus are we made like Him Who giveth all,  
Like Him Whose gracious pleasure bids us fall.

## DEWS.

40 We give ourselves in silent secret ways,  
Spending and spent in silence full of grace;  
And thus are made like God, and show His praise.

## WINDS.

We sift the air and winnow all the earth;  
And God Who poised our weights and weighs our worth  
45 Accepts the worship of our solemn mirth.

FIRE.

My power and strength are His Who fashioned me,  
Ordained me image of His Jealousy,  
Forged me His weapon fierce exceedingly.

HEAT.

50 I glow unto His glory, and do good:  
I glow, and bring to life both bud and brood;  
I glow, and ripen harvest-crops for food.

WINTER AND SUMMER.

Our wealth and joys and beauties celebrate  
His wealth of beauty Who sustains our state,  
Before Whose changelessness we alternate.

SPRING AND AUTUMN.

55 I hope,—  
And I remember,—  
We give place  
Either to other with contented grace,  
Acceptable and lovely all our days.

## FROST.

- 60 I make the unstable stable, binding fast  
The world of waters prone to ripple past:  
Thus praise I God, Whose mercies I forecast.

## COLD.

- I rouse and goad the slothful apt to nod,  
I stir and urge the laggards with my rod:  
65 My praise is not of men, yet I praise God.

## SNOW.

My whiteness shadoweth Him Who is most fair,  
All spotless: yea, my whiteness which I wear  
Exalts His Purity beyond compare.

## VAPOURS.

- We darken sun and moon, and blot the day,  
70 The good Will of our Maker to obey:  
Till to the glory of God we pass away.

## NIGHT.

Moon and all stars I don for diadem  
To make me fair: I cast myself and them  
Before His feet, Who knows us gem from gem.

## DAY.

- 75 I shout before Him in my plentitude  
Of light and warmth, of hope and wealth and food;  
Ascribing all good to the Only Good.

## LIGHT AND DARKNESS.

I am God's dwelling-place,—  
And also I

- 80 Make His pavilion,—  
Lo, we bide and fly  
Exulting in the Will of God Most High.

## LIGHTNING AND THUNDER.

- We indivisible flash forth His Fame,  
We thunder forth the glory of His Name,  
85 In harmony of resonance and flame.

## CLOUDS.

Sweet is our store, exhaled from sea or river:  
We wear a rainbow, praising God the Giver  
Because His mercy is for ever and ever.

## EARTH.

- I rest in Him rejoicing: resting so  
90 And so rejoicing, in that I am low;  
Yet known of Him, and following on to know.

## MOUNTAINS.

Our heights which laud Him, sink abased before  
Him higher than the highest evermore:  
God higher than the highest we adore.

## HILLS.

- 95 We green-tops praise Him, and we fruitful heads,  
Whereon the sunshine and the dew He sheds:  
We green-tops praise Him, rising from our beds.

## GREEN THINGS.

- We all green things, we blossoms bright or dim,  
Trees, bushes, brushwood, corn and grasses slim,  
100 We lift our many-favoured lauds to Him.



ROSE,—LILY,—VIOLET.

I praise Him on my thorn which I adorn,—  
And I, amid my world of thistle and thorn,—  
And I, within my veil where I am born.

APPLE,—CITRON,—POMEGRANATE.

105 We Apple-blossom, Citron, Pomegranate,  
We clothed of God without our toil and fret,  
We offer fatness where His Throne is set.

VINE,—CEDAR,—PALM.

I proffer Him my sweetness, who am sweet,—  
I bow my strength in fragrance at His feet,—  
I wave myself before His Judgment Seat.

MEDICINAL HERBS.

110 I bring refreshment,—  
I bring ease and calm,—  
I lavish strength and healing,—  
I am balm,—  
We work His pitiful Will and chant our psalm.

A SPRING.

115 Clear my pure fountain, clear and pure my rill,  
My fountain and mine outflow deep and still,  
I set His semblance forth and do His Will.

## SEA.

Today I praise God with a sparkling face,  
My thousand thousand waves all uttering praise:  
120 Tomorrow I commit me to His Grace.

## FLOODS.

We spring and swell meandering to and fro,  
From height to depth, from depth to depth we flow,  
We fertilize the world, and praise Him so.

WHALES AND SEA MAMMALS.

We Whales and Monsters gambol in His sight  
125 Rejoicing every day and every night,  
Safe in the tender keeping of His Might.

## FISHES.

Our fashions and our colours and our speeds  
Set forth His praise Who framed us and Who feeds,  
Who knows our number and regards our needs.

## BIRDS.

130 Winged Angels of this visible world, we fly  
To sing God's praises in the lofty sky;  
We scale the height to praise our Lord most High.

EAGLE AND DOVE.

I the sun-gazing Eagle,—  
I the Dove  
135 With plumes of softness and a note of love,—  
We praise by divers gifts One God above.

BEASTS AND CATTLE.

We forest Beasts,—  
We Beasts of hill or cave,—  
We border-loving Creatures of the wave,—  
140 We praise our King with voices deep and grave.





## OF WOMEN—

We praise His Will which made us what He would,  
His Will which fashioned us and called us good,  
185 His Will our plenary beatitude.

## OF MEN.

We praise His Will Who bore with us so long,  
Who out of weakness wrought us swift and strong,  
Champions of right and putters-down of wrong.

## ALL.

Let everything that hath or hath not breath,  
190 Let days and endless days, let life and death,  
Praise God, praise God, praise God, His creature saith.

## LATER LIFE: A DOUBLE SONNET OF SONNETS.

## 1.

Before the mountains were brought forth, before  
Earth and the world were made, then God was God:  
And God will still be God, when flames shall roar  
Round earth and heaven dissolving at His nod:  
5 And this God is our God, even while His rod  
Of righteous wrath falls on us smiting sore:  
And this God is our God for evermore  
Thro' life, thro' death, while clod returns to clod.  
For tho' He slay us we will trust in Him;  
10 We will flock home to Him by divers ways:  
Yea, tho' He slay us we will vaunt His praise,  
Serving and loving with the Cherubim,  
Watching and loving with the Seraphim,  
Our very selves His praise thro' endless days.

## 2.

Rend hearts and rend not garments for our sins;  
Gird sackcloth not on body but on soul;  
Grovel in dust with faces toward the goal  
Nor won, nor neared: he only laughs who wins.  
5 Not neared the goal, the race too late begins;  
All left undone, we have yet to do the whole;  
The sun is hurrying west and toward the pole  
Where darkness waits for earth with all her kins.  
Let us today while it is called today  
10 Set out, if utmost speed may yet avail—  
The shadows lengthen and the light grows pale:  
For who thro' darkness and the shadow of death,  
Darkness that may be felt, shall find a way,  
Blind-eyed, deaf-eared, and choked with failing  
breath?

## 3.

Thou Who didst make and knowest whereof we are  
made,  
Oh bear in mind our dust and nothingness,  
Our wordless tearless dumbness of distress:  
Bear Thou in mind the burden Thou hast laid  
5 Upon us, and our feebleness unstayed  
Except Thou stay us: for the long long race  
Which stretches far and far before our face  
Thou knowest,—remember Thou whereof we are made.  
If making makes us Thine then Thine we are,  
10 And if redemption we are twice Thine own:  
If once Thou didst come down from heaven afar  
To seek us and to find us, how not save?  
Comfort us, save us, leave us not alone,  
Thou Who didst die our death and fill our grave.

## 4.

So tired am I, so weary of today,  
So unrefreshed from foregone weariness,