"WOODMAN, SPARE THAT BLOCK": THE PUBLISHED, UNPUBLISHED, AND PROJECTED ILLUSTRATIONS AND BOOK DESIGNS OF DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

William E. Fredeman

With the notable exception of Blake, a few minor Victorian artist-poets such as W. B. Scott and Noel Paton, and an occasional twentieth-century writer like David Jones, Dante Gabriel Rossetti is almost sui generis (in England at least) as a successful practitioner in both arts. From the age of six, he was precociously conscious of his twin talents and sought to apply art in the service of literature (or vice versa). His earliest recorded writing (about 1834) was entitled "Aladdin, or The Wonderful Lamp, by Gabriel Rossetti, Painter of Play-Pictures" (W.M. Rossetti, FLM 66); and most of his artistic juvenilia consists of illustrations to literary works – The Monk, the Iliad, Faust, the Arabian Nights; the novels of Scott, Mrs. Crowe, and Dickens; and the poems of Edgar Allan Poe. By 1848, when the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was founded, he was regularly working in both media, but throughout his lifetime he vacillated between the two, tending to work exclusively in one or the other, seldom, after his apprentice years, pursuing them in tandem.

There is considerable evidence that Rossetti regarded himself first as a poet, but the tension between the two sides of his creativity is a prominent aspect of his personality, as two letters, written fifteen years apart, confirm. He confessed to William Allingham in 1854, before his reputation as poet or artist was firmly established: "I believe my poetry and painting prevented each other from doing much good for a long while--and now I think I could do better in either, but can't write for then I sha'n't paint." By 1870, when his translations of the Early Italian Poets were a decade behind him, the volume of original Poems announced there in 1861 finally published, and his reputation as a non-exhibiting artist firmly secured by a stable of affluent, reliable, and tolerant patrons, it is clear that he not only recognized but accepted the price that compromising his talents had exacted on his artistic identity and integrity. Writing to his new friend, Dr Thomas Gordon Hake, he said:

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Dante Gabriel Rossetti lived in the XIX cent., a remarkable figure of British Romanticism and Aestheticism. Find more works of this artist at Wikiart.org – best visual art database. 

Dante Gabriel Rossetti was a painter, poet, illustrator, and one of the founders of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Rossetti was born in London in 1828. His father, an Italian political refugee, was a poet, Dante scholar and Professor of Italian at King’s College, London. Rossetti’s family upbringing likely had a profound effect on the artist and his siblings, as they all became poets, artists, and critics. Rossetti was drawn to both poetry and painting, and the synthesis of the two will become an integral part of his art. He began his artistic training in 1841 by entering the Sass’s Drawing A