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VICTORIAN WOMAN'S POETRY

By Linda Shires

PART OF THE EXCITEMENT of reading Victorian woman's poetry lies in its manifold refusals to adopt wholesale the codes and conventions of the male poetic tradition. Such refusal may manifest itself in the bold rewriting of forms (as in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*), or in the unhinging of domestic or romantic pieties through irony and other doubling strategies (as in Dora Greenwell's "Scherzo" or Christina Rossetti's "Winter: My Secret"). Both the rewriting of male forms and the attack on conventional ideologies opened up new subject positions for women. For example, women's responses to poetic tradition and to each other's work initially made use of expressive theory to explore sexual and religious passions simultaneously (as in the poetry of the Brontës), while towards the end of the century, when religion and sexuality were not so inextricably intertwined, women could openly celebrate non-hierarchical sexualities (as in the lesbian poems of Michael Field).

Through the example of eighteenth-century woman poets, such as Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Joanna Baillie, and Charlotte Smith, who had adopted and transformed genres of privileged male poetic discourse, including the ode, satire, and epistle, and through the dominant figure of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, whose sharp mind and pen served as a model for much subsequent women's poetry, many Victorian women poets were enabled to write an analytical, skeptical, social poetry that explored epistemologies and ideologies they did not take for granted, no matter what the topic. They have not always been seen in this light. And it is to the credit of the recent anthologizers of Victorian women poets under review here — Angela Leighton and Margaret Reynolds, Margaret Higonnet, and Isobel Armstrong and Joseph Bristow — that they have pored over the archives and previous collections to find material that demonstrates both the range and the depth of women's voices in the era. Each anthology is quite different, because even when the poets themselves overlap, selections do not. When set side by side, the anthologies also take on a more distinctive tone and focus than might be readily apparent from judging them singly.

In their Preface to *Victorian Women Poets: An Anthology*, editors Angela Leighton and Margaret Reynolds explain that their two main criteria for poem selection are literary merit and representation of a tradition. They thus give major poets more space than minor ones and work to establish cross-currents by showing influences, common themes, and shared forms. The tag "Victorian" in their title represents ideologies and aesthetics more than an exact historical period; they feature fifty poets from Felicia Hemans to Charlotte

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Mew. Each editor offers a short, respectable introduction in which they jointly provide a history of the annual and album craze, explain the feminization of poetry, and isolate major topics persistently treated by women poets. They include short introductions to each poet, which are exemplary, if not always equal in sophistication. They also provide bibliographies of the poets' works and lists of useful, up-to-date anthologies and criticism. Each editor brings strong credentials to the task: Leighton is known as one of the best critics in the field and Reynolds is a researcher and editor of Barrett. For the most part, their taste and judgment is unerring, though the omission of poems such as Jean Ingelow's "The High Tide on the Coast of Lincolnshire, 1571" or Greenwell's "Home" seems odd (particularly in light of Leighton's emphasis on domestic poems about home in her Introduction). But a reviewer of an anthology as rich as this one should not, I think, quibble too much about what was excluded.

Both Leighton and Reynolds refer to a received history of the Poetess which is worth mentioning here, as it is repeated in other recent anthology introductions, to lesser or greater degrees, and yet complicated by other works under review. The narrative goes as follows: during the nineteenth century, the importance of the woman poet was first re-established through the burgeoning of annuals and album books. Given the decorative nature of these books, the prevailing attitude towards women's intellect as inferior to men's, and the absence of a great woman poet in the literary field, early Victorian criticism of Poetesses tends to prettify their contributions. Following, in part, on the view of Felicia Hemans and L.E.L. as poets of sensibility, commentators discuss Poetesses of the 1830s as offering up predictable, emotional lyric effusions, usually restricted to the domestic. Later, when Elizabeth Barrett Browning has made her mark and when other woman poets, under pseudonyms or not, have begun to publish volumes in large numbers, the Poetess is reconceived as a bold, exciting poet working in varied forms with less restricted themes.

Of course, as Leighton and Reynolds know, the actual historical case, illustrated by the poetry itself, is somewhat different from this tale told through publishing locations and contemporary criticism — a more mixed and historically untidy situation. In fact, the most accomplished women writers of the 1830s, such as L.E.L. and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, were already experimenting with form and politicizing content in poems on slavery and gender that they published, respectively, in annuals such as *Fisher's Drawing Room Scrap Book* and *Findens' Tableaux* (see Leighton, *Victorian Women Poets: Writing Against the Heart* 82 and Reynolds xxvii). The woman poet was taking on the male tradition, as well, long before she seemed to be doing so. It is equally clear — and this is a main point worth stressing repeatedly — that women poets' experimentation or boldness was often missed, misread, or simply ignored because of the overdetermined critical expectations of their times. We find in a woman poet what we look for. But it is generally true, as this traditional narrative states, that the received role of the woman poet did change and was understood as altering from saccharine, sentimental Poetess to a tougher female poet.

Leighton and Reynolds are eager to feature the development of this poet figure at mid-century and after. The topics treated in poems they choose are wide, including a particularly strong representation of poems dealing with science and those drawing overtly on religion, but for the most part the tone of the poems chosen is serious. There is the occasional "song," as well as selections from Ingelow's *Mopsa the Fairy*. However, poetry for children or poetry with humor — other than irony — is not strongly represented. There are few working class poets (Eliza Cook is one) or writers from the colonies

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— an omission that gives a flavor of elitism to the selection. The strength of the anthology for this reader, and probably for a number of teachers of Victorian poetry, is the ample and careful selection of poems by writers taught too often before via xeroxes, such as Dora Greenwell, May Probyn, Augusta Webster, Amy Levy, and Alice Meynell. There is also a very welcome long selection of Mary Coleridge's work. Such selections appear alongside a plentiful representation of works by Christina Rossetti and Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

British Women Poets of the 19th Century, edited by Margaret Randolph Higonnet, offers a fruitful comparison to Leighton and Reynolds. Because of Higonnet's previous wide-ranging scholarship (from children's literature to women and war) and her knowledge of Enlightenment, Romantic, Victorian, and twentieth-century texts, Continental as well as British, it is no surprise that her anthology casts a wider net (Anna Dodsworth to Charlotte Mew). Nor is it a surprise that her Introduction complicates the traditional narrative somewhat by reminding us of the importance of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars to women's social vision, which remained such a critical aspect of their poetic tradition. Although Higonnet, like Leighton and Reynolds, mentions the importance of de Staël's *Corinne* and includes a number of salient poems in which a woman pays tribute to a prior woman writer (to E.B.B., to Sappho, to Smith, to Hemans, to L.E.L., to Sand), she does not, it seems to me, overstress the female literary tradition to the exclusion of men. Indeed, while clearly concerned to deepen and enrich the female tradition, she is commendably just as interested in the fading of boundaries between masculine and feminine spheres, in women's public roles, in their uses of male characters and male personae, in their relations to largely male traditions such as Romanticism, and in their response to war or empire.

Virginia Blain, currently preparing her own anthology (forthcoming from Macmillan), has commented that Margaret Higonnet's anthology reveals pleasure as well as rigor in selection. One of the features I, too, like most about Higonnet's collection is its greater inclusion of what Leighton and Reynolds downplay: the comic and ostensibly light. Here we have a poem such as "In the Toy Shop" by May Kendall or the witty "On a Noble Captain" by Anna Dodsworth, the mock-heroic "Sappho Burns her Books . . ." by Elizabeth Moody, or "If a mouse could fly," "Brown and furry," and "If a Pig wore a wig" by Christina Rossetti. It seems to me that if we are to grasp the fullness of the gender critique in the period and if we are to appreciate the many-toned incisiveness of a poet such as Rossetti, we should include nursery rhymes and other examples of what appears to be "minor" verse, or verse on childish and childlike topics, if only to send ourselves back to the original volumes from which they come.

"Sing-Song," for example, which includes "If a Pig wore a wig," is a volume of 121 lyrics which comprise an anti-narrative narrative that is critical to Rossetti's career. She is as powerfully interested here, as elsewhere, in undercutting the codes of female conduct imparted to girls so early as to be almost impossible to resist. Yet "Sing-Song" also bears comparison with other lyric sequences and with other Victorian poems which purport to be narratives, but which are not.

Higonnet offers almost fifty poets as well, but the author introductions and notes are shorter and her book slimmer, while happily less expensive for students, than that of Leighton and Reynolds or Bristow and Armstrong. The space constraints Higonnet presumably faced prevent a longer selection from such important sequences as Webster's

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"Mother and Daughter" or Rossetti's "Monna Innominata," but on the whole hers is a judicious selection that whets the appetite for more.

The largest collection, with over one hundred poets represented, and the anthology with the most learned and condensed introduction, is that offered by Isobel Armstrong and Joseph Bristow in *Nineteenth-Century Women Poets.* Like Higonnet's, their volume covers the century. Also like Higonnet's, theirs occasionally reprints works by writers from the colonies, as well as from all parts of Great Britain. While Armstrong and Bristow judge anthologies to have many uses, such as sending us to sources or offering the finest poems of a period, their strategy was, they explain, to publish sufficient amounts of work to allow readers to form their own judgments. They thus allot substantial place to thirty poets, allow less space for poets who worked significantly in one type of poetry, such as the popular song or the hymn, the legend, or lullaby, and give the least space to authors with only a few very fine poems. To get a fuller view of the period than we have seen before, they usefully offer work by neglected writers such as Eliza Keary and by working class poets, such as Mary Colling, Charlotte Richardson, Ellen Johnston, and Louisa Horsfield. The introductions and notes in this volume are superbly reliable, but often shorter than those of Leighton and Reynolds, as is the list of recommended reading at the end.

Armstrong and Bristow rely on the typical ordering device of birthdate, but within that structure, choose materials that resonate with thematic cross-connections. The second part of their introduction teases out such connections and suggests how a reader might navigate her way through the volume. However, the most valuable section of the introduction is surely their description of the political formations and cultural groupings to which various poets belonged. Unless one knows a good deal about these women poets or has done archival research, it is often a mystery how to group them politically. One must depend on letters, on publication sites, or on their non-fictional prose. So here Armstrong and Bristow provide a real service to us.

It has taken us a long time and much effort to understand the highly imbricated connections among women poets — whether through influence, friendship, or tradition. By drawing our attention to the political and philosophical affiliations of women poets, Bristow and Armstrong are committed to substantively altering how we think of the female contribution. In this way, Armstrong is also, it seems to me, building on work she has done in her monumental critical book *Victorian Poetry*, which is centrally concerned with politics and gender. In the anthology introduction, after explaining that the hegemonic middle class was obviously not homogenous, Armstrong and Bristow group writers according to religious and political beliefs and, importantly, to the journals in which they most frequently published. So, for instance, while we might know that Barbauld, part of a dissenting tradition, contributed to the Unitarian and Utilitarian *Monthly Repository* or that this journal was linked to the Brownings, it might not be readily clear that the social concerns of this tradition also appear in the work of Adelaide Anne Procter, George Eliot, Augusta Webster, Emily Pfeiffer, Louisa Shore, and L. S. Bevington.

Yet, as the editors rightly demonstrate, affiliations alter and lines of connection sometimes blur. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, for instance, in *Aurora Leigh* (1856) recalls a different tradition than that of the *Monthly Repository.* This shift on her part may also be due, at least somewhat, to a larger movement in the 1850s, centered in the Langham Place Group. As is well known, that group of women campaigned vigorously in person and through their journals for women's education, professional gain, and female literary

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culture. Armstrong and Bristow range widely in this section of the introduction, drawing important connections among individuals and groups — some of which are well known and others of which are not. By doing so, they lay the groundwork for much research and analysis.

The last section of the introduction, in some ways the most provocative and yet also the weakest, turns to style — arguing that the early part of the century features an emotive and discursive language of the heart which eventually turns into a more compressed philosophical lyric mode, familiar to us from Modernism. They devise the names of "monumental legend" and "oceanic monody" for what they call the two most important genres of the earlier part of the period. Neither of these names nor the ensuing description of the genres seems particularly helpful. One genre refuses myth and realism, but presents a trace of history. The other flows with a loosely organized lyric form as if feelings dictate that form. These forms are then replaced, argue the editors, by dramatic monologue and compressed lyric. Yet I also wonder about the too tidy historical overview presented here, even though the general outlines seem correct, in that Victorian poetic forms do respond to an increasingly fractured ideology of experience and value. In addition, one can certainly see the influence of Hemans and L.E.L. being explored, rather than merely adopted, as women poets move away from what is sometimes called the poetry of sentiment. Still, I think that Armstrong's critical work in *Victorian Poetry*, particularly the analysis of the double poem — an argument which is not in evidence here — proves far more stimulating and productive in light of Victorian literature generally, including poetry by men.

If I were to fault the anthologies on any grounds, and it is difficult to do so when we are all indebted so enormously to these collections, I could only wish that the introductions were not quite so much focused on theme, instead of analysis of form, and not so exclusively devoted to women influencing women instead of women among men and women. While the female tradition is spoken about as "lost" and each anthology is performing a "recovery" operation, as Virginia Jackson and Yopie Prins point out in the current issue of this journal, it is also necessary to go beyond the editors' general statements. For instance, Leighton states in her introduction that women's poetry altered the whole development of Victorian poetry (xxxv); Armstrong and Bristow refer to women's rewriting of male genres (xxxvi). Leighton is right that women poets did more than feminize the field, as Tennyson's career and reputation illustrate. Moreover, they did more than make the field varied, by producing a whole new set of themes and concerns, inflected by very different psychologies, backgrounds, and styles. But I think, if one makes this type of general claim, it is necessary as well to show some kind of conversation between men and women poets and to say more about how women helped alter the forms, and even extended the skepticism, of Victorian poetry. If these anthologies cannot do so, because this is not their primary focus, they do at least make it possible for critics to augment and refine such connections in the next decade.

For the influence of women on women in the nineteenth century is half the story. The other half concerns exactly what legacy was left by the male Romantics for women poets and how women responded to that legacy and to its survival in male poets (such as Alfred Lord Tennyson or Robert Browning) in their own day. If I suggest, following Armstrong's critical work, that Victorian women poets, under cover of a superficial piety, often wrote an analytical, skeptical, and social poetry, drawing out the most political strands available in prior women's poetry, I also hold, pace Armstrong, that it was a poetry consistently in

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dialogue with men's, even when it was not undertaking to re-write privileged male genres. Victorian women's double-pronged dialogue with women's and men's traditions, as well as with their contemporaries, enabled a highly complicated verse in which female subjectivity, the status and value of female experience, and women's passions could be presented with varieties of sophistication and force.

One example of such conversation in a complicated literary field is the woman poet's work which responds to that of a male poet. In particular, certain women's poems respond directly to poems by male predecessors or contemporaries in order to democratize authority or stake new ground. I am arguing here neither for a theory of influence — a kind of poetic fathering — nor a theory of collaboration — a kind of marriage — but for a theory of public debate. The woman poet relies on tropes, language, and topics from the original in her response, but only to disidentify and offer another view and another rhetoric. The woman poet does not seek to annul meanings in the first poem or overturn them. Rather she seeks to call the first poem into question in ways that it might not already call itself into question.

Women poets who write pendants of this type respond directly to a Romantic legacy of the feminine. We could take Tennyson as a prime example since he is part of the Victorian poetic male tradition in which the female is central. He too enacts in his poetry the search for a female complement or sensibility. I think we take it as axiomatic that Romantic male poets ascribed enormous power to the feminine in such representations as "Alastor," "Ode to Autumn," "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," "Christabel," the Lucy poems, and others. They may figure her as a demon or an angel. They may figure her as the mighty power of nature or of the imagination, but they remain captivated by her. Coleridge throws out a particular challenge to Victorian women writers by suggesting that the demonic Geraldine and the angelic Christabel, in his poem of the same name, should be interpenetrated and made into one figure. He suggests, basically, that a double figure would be a truer woman, even if he is still confined to stereotypical notions of womanhood.

The centrality and the power of woman, as well as her often objectified status, is a key part of the male Romantic legacy of the feminine, to which Victorian women poets respond. In fact, the legacy almost demands female voices of response, for the major male Victorian poets, working out of separate aesthetic and political traditions from each other, as Browning and Tennyson do, are just as incapable of complicating the view of women as were Wordsworth or Coleridge, Byron, Keats, or Shelley. If Browning is at least able to view the female as real, as well as ideal, and if he can critique a male mind like the Duke's in "My Last Duchess," Browning usually grants her power indirectly or stereotypically. Relatively few of his poems are spoken by women. When women appear, men speak for them or about them. Tennyson is also deeply ambivalent about the feminine, especially the woman powerful in sexuality or intellect. It is this ambivalence that women poets register keenly. Women poets are left with a legacy of powerful women and the objectified feminine, a legacy crying out for their response.

One could argue for various pendants of men's and women's poems in the Victorian period, where women offer a different representation of the female or question the male-authored poetic texture. Many such poems revise the passivity, sentimental suicidalism, or comforting domestic role which men write for women. For example, Augusta Webster's "Circe" revises Tennyson's "The Lotos Eaters," her "Blanche Lisle" revises "Mariana," as does, one could argue, Dora Greenwell's "Scherzo." Elizabeth Barrett

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Browning's "The Romaunt of the Page," a crucial poem for understanding women's poetic identity and its relation to men's, could be said to respond to Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott," as well as to Byron's "Lara." As I have argued elsewhere, Christina Rossetti's "Autumn" of 1858 (she wrote two with this title) can also be read as a counterstatement to Tennyson's figures of women poets, as well as a revision of the Romantic legacy. One can take this argument further. Women's poetry as part of a larger, self-conscious, epistemological and social project invariably conducts a dialogue with the male, whether that male be God, a husband, a lover, a brother, a poet, a male marketplace, a male perspective of woman, a male tradition, or a male principle. It is not until the late nineteenth century, in a poem such as the lesbian Michael Field's (i.e., Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper's) poem "The Sleeping Venus" (1892), included by Higonnet and by Armstrong and Bristow, that we get a new view of woman, by woman, for woman. Field pays tribute to a male painter, Giorgione, who created a text that women poets could animate, but she relegates the male view to a secondary position by re-imaging Venus as the spirit of female autoeroticism. Women's poetry of the nineteenth century must be seen and evaluated, then, not only as a music of its own, a phrase employed by Isobel Armstrong for a chapter of her *Victorian Poetry* to describe women's traditions, groups, and aesthetics. But women's poetry must also be studied in terms of male representations of women in poetry and in terms of how the female poet introjects, revises or demolishes such representations.

In addition to the contribution of these magnificent anthologies, and others from the recent past and near future, we must also be especially grateful for texts helping us to revise or rethink the literary historical past and woman's voice. Work on Sappho by Yopie Prins and on L.E.L. by Glennis Stephenson, Jerome McGann, and Daniel Riess offers just two examples of a spate of current scholarship which will enrich our increasingly nuanced study of women's poetry.

In *Victorian Sappho*, Yopie Prins shows how the famous Greek woman poet becomes a name with multiple significations in the nineteenth century. She argues that the Victorian period is an especially important moment in the reception of Sappho, because of the inheritance of the Romantic fascination with fragments. Providing an alternative story to that told by the feminization of poetry through annuals, album books, and poem volumes, as articulated well by critic-editors such as Leighton and Reynolds, Prins shows how Sappho's reception also influenced the gendering of lyric as feminine.

Drawing extensively on her knowledge of Greek and nineteenth-century philology, as well as Deconstruction and feminist theory, Prins persuasively argues that "the projected fantasy of a female body and a feminine voice through linguistic scattering, grammatical dismemberment, rhetorical contradiction — as well as other forms of disjunction, hiatus, and ellipsis — suggests why Sappho became the exemplar of lyric in its irreducibly textual embodiment, and exemplary of reading lyric as well, in its desire to hypothesize a living whole from dead letters" (ms 2). Prins declines the name of Sappho in multiple ways: in terms of the assumption of lyric voice, in terms of lesbian topography in lyrics of Michael Field, and in terms of an allegorical reading of rhythm that gives form to a Swinburnian sublime. This is a rich, stimulating book, valuable for its feminism as well as for what it tells us about the reception and cultural uses of Sappho in the Victorian period.

As Prins demonstrates in her last, important chapter, Victorian Poetesses were initially, at least, identified with a Sapphic figure that personified expressive theory. Yet Prins goes well beyond an analysis of such identifications through reception. She reads

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literary history as being produced by the repetition of the effacement of the Poetess — as we can still see with the anthologies recently published, which are recovery projects of lost poets. The Poetess is always being lost to be rediscovered, argues Prins, always being lost so as to be transmitted. Prins could easily have reconstructed a tradition of women poets relying on Sappho. Yet she demonstrates, instead, how various women turn to Sappho as a trope to perform the repeating loss of the Poetess. The repetition of the trope points to the entry of the Poetess into history itself as an always uncertain event.

The career of Letitia Elizabeth Landon (L.E.L.), prominently mentioned by Prins in her final chapter, can be seen as a reiteration of this trope. As Prins, Stephenson, McGann, and Riess concur, Landon's strange death (suicide? overdose of drug for spasms? murder?) was predicted in some of her poetry, which dwelt so heavily on the death of the Poetess. Landon's Sappho points out how a lyric figure is always mediated by the moment of its reception. Even while she was alive, remarks Prins, Landon's poetry was read from the perspective of its afterlife and was often read through Sappho. Indeed, the association between L.E.L. and Sappho (Landon was called "the English Sappho," "the Song-Born Sappho of our Age") increased her marketability. It was a persona both cultivated by her and thrust upon her. Yet the distinction Glennis Stephenson makes between an historical person and a poetic persona is difficult to disentangle, as Prins remarks. It is difficult, that is, to separate a woman from the overdetermined and predetermined expectations we have of her as poet.

Yet that is the task Glennis Stephenson sets herself in a full examination of Landon's life, steeped in primary research and current poetry criticism. Stephenson offers an account of person and career as overlapping but also as separate. Aiming to "examine the conditions under which L.E.L. emerged and the various factors which influenced and contributed to the production of this multifaceted figure" (5), this critical study also identifies the dominant voice of the Poetess and the dissonant voices with which it conflicts, and traces the endless struggle for control over L.E.L. in life and death. The book wisely takes up not only the poetry, though it performs that task with sensitivity. It also covers critical reviews, gossip, memoirs, the materiality of the books produced and in which she was represented, as well as prefaces, essays, and letters.

As is now well known, L.E.L. was one of the most controversial and important of the early nineteenth-century women poets. What we know less about is her work at promoting herself to gain critical and popular success. If Landon herself did not completely fit the role of woman poet, she made sure that any input she had into the construction of L.E.L. did so. In fact, she deliberately crafted the female poetic self and manipulated the rules set out by the male establishment, an establishment which persistently conflated woman and artist. Like Barrett after her, L.E.L. did not see these roles as necessarily identical. More than Barrett, she took the subject of mask and camouflage of an "authentic" self as one of the central metaphors in her poetry (17). And more than Barrett would, Landon exploited a "showiness" in her writing corresponding to a notion of "performance" (121).

Stephenson, widely read in poetry of the period, also offers us a complex view of the annual and album book rage and the bluestocking role for women poets, particularly in Chapter 6. Filling out and complicating the narratives offered in other books under review, she notes that while there were many successful women who fulfilled the dominant role carved out for the Poetess, there were others, such as Lucy Aikin, Esme Erskine, and Margaret Holford, who wrote a political poetry, following on the models set by earlier

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poets like Charlotte Smith. In addition, while we are apt to consider all annual contributions as too bland, the annuals did not always succumb to conventional standards and virtues (152). One of the most interesting parts of Stephenson's book is the chapter in which she shows how readings and misreadings of Landon, following her death, struggled to reconcile woman and Poetess, thus exposing the faultline not only in Victorian criticism but also in the general treatment of women writers in the nineteenth century.

In their all too short but provocative Introduction to *Letitia Elizabeth Landon: Selected Writings*, Jerome McGann and Daniel Riess fill out a picture of Landon in terms of male poets, chiefly Byron, which augments work done by Leighton in *Victorian Women Poets* and the life/work study by Stephenson. They offer the fascinating argument that Byronic tags and allusions in her work are deployed as second order signs of "the presence of a poetical discourse of personal disillusionment" and further characterize her socially self-conscious style as radically demystifying the ancient authority of poetry (23). This is a particularly resonating argument about a poetess who was constantly referred to by later women poets.

The volume offers a fair representation of Landon's poems and essays and is supplemented by a short set of notes and even more useful appendices of contemporary reviews, poems written by and about L.E.L., "Lezione per L'amore": the first published version of "Song" ("Where, oh, where's the chain to fling"), and an Index to the Poetry. The volume recommends itself for classroom use, except for its fragility. On the second opening, the spine broke and pages fell out, leaving me with Sapphic fragments scattered on the floor and a newly revived threat of the disappearing Poetess.

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