

Intertextuality and the context of reception: ***Despised and Rejected*** by Christina Rossetti

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Main activity 3 – group work

- ❖ Divide the class into two, according to sheet colour, and appoint a 'team leader' for each group
 - The poem sections group have to try to order themselves correctly to construct the poem
 - The Bible verse group have to make a spider-diagram of the themes and messages contained in the Bible verses.

Main activity 4 – whole class reading and discussion

- ❖ Distribute copies of the whole poem [**Resource C**] and read through together
 - Clear up any difficulties with tricky language and problems of understanding.
- ❖ Discuss, and annotate around the poem:
 - What is the poem about?
 - Is it about what the students had anticipated?
 - Why might a Christian be concerned with 'opening their doors' to the poor?
 - What is the 'story' of the poem?
 - Did the students manage to order themselves correctly?
 - What are the main ideas, themes, and images in the poem?
 - Which ones had students already picked out?
 - What is the message of the poem?
 - Why did Rossetti write it?
 - Do these messages link with the themes and messages which the Bible verse group wrote on their spider-diagram?

Main activity 5 – considering intertextuality

- ❖ Read the poem again
 - This time the students with the Bible verses sheets should interrupt (stand up/buzz?) when they think they have reached a section of the poem which is inspired by their Bible verse
 - They need to try and justify their link.
- ❖ Now watch the Film clip [**Resource E**]
 - Ask students to comment on its impact.
- ❖ Distribute copies of the whole poem with the Bible verses [**Resource D**].

Plenary - reflecting on Rossetti's use of the Bible

- ❖ Students should organise themselves into their poem section/Bible verse pairs. Work in these pairs to discuss and complete the following sentence starter prompts:
 - The Bible verses help the poem make sense in that...
 - The Bible verses make the poem more powerful because...
 - Together, the poem and the Bible verses which inspired it communicate that...
 - Rossetti's relationship with the Bible is...
 - Rossetti believed that people should...
- Feedback ideas to the class.

Homework

Go to www.crossref-it.info/textguide/The-poetry-of-Christina-Rossetti/28/1823 to add to annotations on the poem.

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Resources

Resource A

My sun has set, I dwell
In darkness as a dead man out of sight;
And none remains, not one, that I should tell
To him mine evil plight
This bitter night.

I will make fast my door
That hollow friends may trouble me no more.
'*Friend, open to Me.*'—Who is this that calls?
Nay, I am deaf as are my walls:
Cease crying, for I will not hear
Thy cry of hope or fear.
Others were dear,
Others forsook me: what art thou indeed
That I should heed
Thy lamentable need?
Hungry should feed,
Or stranger lodge thee here?

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'Friend, My Feet bleed.

Open thy door to Me and comfort Me.'

I will not open, trouble me no more.

Go on thy way footsore,

I will not rise and open unto thee.

'Then is it nothing to thee? Open, see

Who stands to plead with thee.'

'Open, lest I should pass thee by, and thou

One day entreat My Face

And howl for grace,

And I be deaf as thou art now.

Open to Me.'

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Then I cried out upon him: Cease,
 Leave me in peace:
 Fear not that I should crave
 Aught thou mayst have.
Leave me in peace, yea trouble me no more,
 Lest I arise and chase thee from my door.
 What, shall I not be let
 Alone, that thou dost vex me yet?
But all night long that voice spake urgently:
 '*Open to Me.*'
 Still harping in mine ears:
 '*Rise, let Me in.*'

Pleading with tears:
'Open to Me that I may come to thee.'

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While the dew dropped, while the dark hours were cold:

*'My Feet bleed, see My Face,
See My Hands bleed that bring thee grace,
My Heart doth bleed for thee,
Open to Me.'*

So till the break of day:

Then died away
That voice, in silence as of sorrow;
Then footsteps echoing like a sigh
Passed me by,
Lingering footsteps slow to pass.
On the morrow
I saw upon the grass
Each footprint marked in blood, and on my door
The mark of blood for evermore.

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Resource B

For the enemy ... hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead. Therefore ... my heart within me is desolate.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, 'Come ... inherit the kingdom ... For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in...

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire ... For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink. I was a stranger, and ye took me not in ...'

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Behold, I [Jesus] stand at the door, and knock

When once the master of the house ... hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are ... depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth...

Jesus saith ... 'Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.'

If any man hear my voice, and open the door,
I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

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Thomas said unto them,
Except I shall see in [Jesus'] hands the print of the nails, and ... thrust my hand into
his side,
I will not believe.

And [the Israelites] shall take of the blood [of the lamb], and strike it on the two side
posts and on the upper door post of the houses.
... and when I [God] see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be
upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

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Resource C

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My sun has set, I dwell
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To him mine evil plight
This bitter night.
I will make fast my door
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'Friend, open to Me.'--Who is this that calls?
Nay, I am deaf as are my walls:
Cease crying, for I will not hear
Thy cry of hope or fear.
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'Then is it nothing to thee? Open, see
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Then I cried out upon him: Cease,

