



Poetry, Pictures, and Popular Publishing: The Illustrated Gift Book and Victorian Visual Culture, 1855-1875

Lorraine Janzen Kooistra

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In *Poetry, Pictures, and Popular Publishing* eminent Rossetti scholar Lorraine Janzen Kooistra demonstrates the cultural centrality of a neglected artifact: the Victorian illustrated gift book. Turning a critical lens on “drawing-room books” as both material objects and historical events, Kooistra reveals how the gift book’s visual/verbal form mediated “high” and popular art as well as book and periodical publication.

A composite text produced by many makers, the poetic gift book was designed for domestic space and a female audience; its mode of publication marks a significant moment in the history of authorship, reading, and publishing. With rigorous attention to the gift book’s aesthetic and ideological features, Kooistra analyzes the contributions of poets, artists, engravers, publishers, and readers and shows how its material form moved poetry into popular culture. Drawing on archival and periodical research, she offers new readings of Eliza Cook, Adelaide Procter, and Jean Ingelow and shows the transatlantic reach of their verses. Boldly re-situating Tennyson’s works within the gift-book economy he dominated, Kooistra demonstrates how the conditions of corporate authorship shaped the production and reception of the laureate’s verses at the peak of his popularity.

Poetry, Pictures, and Popular Publishing changes the map of poetry’s place—in all its senses—in Victorian everyday life and consumer culture.

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