

The Romanticization of the Dead Female Body in Victorian and Contemporary Culture

by Brenna Mulhall

In “The Philosophy of Composition,” Edgar Allan Poe writes the infamous line: “the death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world” (548). This problematic contention, which equates female death with poetic inspiration, is one of the hallmarks of the arts during the Victorian Age. Poe, along with many famous male artists of the time, engaged with this idea and ultimately exploited young women throughout their work by implying that there is something inherently beautiful about their demise. While many male writers and artists used the death of young women as their inspiration, some female artists of the Victorian Age, most notably Christina Rossetti and Elizabeth Siddall,¹ used their art to highlight this exploitation and reclaim their subjectivity as creators, instead of passive muses. Poe’s contention continued throughout the twentieth century with the death of Evelyn McHale, whose demise was hailed “the most beautiful suicide,” and has persisted into the twenty-first century (Cosgrove). From the suicide of Ruslana Korshunova to the hundreds of advertisements and modeling campaigns that glamorize female death, it is clear that the Victorian fascination and romanticization of the dead female body is intact in contemporary culture. Ultimately, this romanticization has persisted in part due to the fact that representations of dead female bodies exemplify the feminine ideal: passive, visionless, and voiceless.

Edgar Allan Poe’s contention that the death of a beautiful woman is the most poetical topic in art underlies a significant percentage of the literary works that he created throughout his short life. Poe’s obsession with portraying dead and dying women

in his literature is likely rooted in the immense grief and loss that he experienced after the deaths of several key women in his life, including his mother and his young wife (Hutchisson 16, 134). While Poe does not explicitly relate his literature to the loss of these beloved women, he explains his repeated portrayals of death in the essay “The Philosophy of Composition.” Drawing upon his experience of loss, he suggests that the most legitimate poetical tone is melancholy and that the most effective way to evoke such a tone is to depict death (Poe 548). In addition, the women in Poe’s works who appear to be dead or dying are, more often than not, portrayed as voiceless and passive objects. For instance, although the poem “Annabel Lee” is named after the character, the reader never actually hears Annabel Lee’s voice. In fact, the story of her life and death is told by her grieving lover who claims that her only purpose in life was to “love and be loved by [him]” (Poe 441). The speaker declares that nothing could “dissever [his] soul from the soul / Of the beautiful Annabel Lee” (Poe 441). Although he clearly feels figuratively close to her soul, the speaker also suggests that he is literally close to her when he remarks that every night he lies with the corpse of his deceased lover in her tomb. The speaker’s disturbing obsession with Annabel Lee may suggest that he is engaging in necrophilia with her “beautiful” dead body. As she cannot talk back or speak for herself, she represents the ideal Victorian woman.

Similarly, Charles Baudelaire, a French poet and Poe translator, uses dead and dying women as the principal inspiration for his literary works. In his poem “I Worship You,” the speaker declares his love for a woman even though she dismisses his advances. Instead of deterring him, her resistance strengthens his love for her, as he claims that his infatuation grows “the more [she] flees from [him]” (Baudelaire 3). He compares her appearance to an “ornament,” as if she were a beautiful decoration whose sole purpose was to be aesthetically pleasing (Baudelaire 4). After

¹ In this paper, I will refer to Elizabeth Siddall using the original spelling of her last name instead of the spelling that her husband, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, used in public discourse. Rossetti changed the spelling of Siddall’s name because he believed his spelling (Siddal) was more elegant (Orlando 612).

the first stanza, the speaker becomes extremely aggressive: He describes himself advancing “to the attack” and climbing “to the assault” against the woman (Baudelaire 7). He then compares his actions to “a chorus of worms [that] climb over a corpse” and suggests that he cherishes her “coldness” as it makes her more beautiful (Baudelaire 7-9). The scene that the speaker describes in the second stanza resembles a rape scene in which the speaker aims to “attack” and “assault” the woman he claims to love (Baudelaire 7). This scene is made all the more disturbing when the speaker compares his actions to worms that eat away at a decaying corpse, suggesting that he could be engaging in necrophilia. Though he could be claiming that she is aloof when he describes her as cold, it is also likely that he is referring to the literal warmth of her body or lack thereof (Baudelaire 9). By comparing his lust to the way that worms eat the decaying flesh of corpses, he likens death to his romantic desire. In addition, Baudelaire romanticizes the woman’s immobility, passivity, and lack of control. Just as a corpse cannot resist the insects that contribute to its decay, the woman cannot fight back against the advances of the speaker. Her inability to resist makes her all the more attractive to the speaker because by not resisting, she becomes more like the ideal Victorian woman.

Likewise, the poem “He Wishes His Beloved Were Dead” by William Butler Yeats demonstrates the ways in which death is the ultimate form of passivity. The speaker begins the poem by describing what his interactions would be like with his lover if she were dead. He claims that if his beloved were “lying cold and dead,” he would lay his “head on [her] breast” and she “would murmur tender words” to him (Yeats 1, 4, 5). He also suggests that if she were dead, she would forgive him and would not “hasten away” even though she has the “will of wild birds” (Yeats 7-8). The speaker implies that his relationship with his beloved would be better if she were dead because he could tame, control, and dominate her “wild” spirit. This perverse Victorian fascination with dead women that defined much of the literary works of the time is reinforced in the image of the perfect woman as pliable, passive, and easily dominated.

The poem “The Lady of Shalott” by Lord Alfred Tennyson also demonstrates the ways in which female death was idealized and romanticized during the Victorian Age. In the poem, the Lady of Shalott is imprisoned within a tower on the island of Shalott. She is under a curse in which she cannot look towards the city of Camelot, but instead must spend her days weaving. The Lady of Shalott is only permitted to see the world through a mirror, and if she looks directly at Camelot, she will face unknown consequences. One day, the Lady of Shalott becomes “half sick of shadows” and stops weaving so that she can look at the Knight Lancelot, with whom she quickly falls in love (Tennyson 71). By turning around to look at Lancelot, she is immediately cursed and must die. The Lady of Shalott gets into a boat, in which she carves her name, and “lying, robed in snowy white” she floats down the river toward Camelot (Tennyson 136). As she is dying and floating down the river, the Lady of Shalott sings a “carol, mournful, holy / Chanted loudly, chanted lowly / Till her blood was frozen slowly / And her eyes were darkened wholly” (Tennyson 145-148). When she arrives at the water’s edge in Camelot, the townspeople look upon her dead body in the boat, and when the crowd parts Lancelot remarks that the deceased Lady of Shalott “has a lovely face” (Tennyson 169). Lady of Shalott’s narrative parallels the ways in which many women were oppressed during the Victorian Age: She is imprisoned within her home, and her only purpose is to fulfill her domestic duties; however, when the Lady of Shalott neglects her household duties, she becomes a fallen woman. Consequently, the moment that the Lady of Shalott gains freedom from her imprisonment, she dies with only a passing comment on her appearance from Lancelot. Her death is depicted as peaceful and romantic—she wears a snowy white dress that “loosely flew to left and right” (Tennyson 137), and it’s implied that her love for Lancelot is what leads to her ultimate demise. In addition, various artistic interpretations of Tennyson’s poem eroticize the Lady of Shalott by depicting her as overtly sexual and desirable. For example, Sidney Meteyard’s interpretation of the Lady of Shalott depicts her leaning back and



Fig. 1. Sidney Meteyard, "I am Half Sick of Shadows," Said the Lady of Shalott, 1913. Oil on Canvas.

opening her body towards viewers, suggesting that she is sexually vulnerable (see fig. 1). In addition, because her face is turned away from viewers, she is vulnerable to their gaze and has no power to turn her gaze away, making her submissive and visionless.

Oscar Wilde romanticizes female death through the character of Sybil Vane in his novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Dorian Gray falls in love with the beautiful, young actress Sybil Vane after seeing her perform in one of Shakespeare's plays. However, when Sybil performs terribly as Juliet, Dorian realizes that he only loved Sybil because of her beautiful performance. He tells her that he no longer loves her and "can't see her again" (Wilde 86). Devastated by Dorian's rejection, Sybil ultimately takes her own life. While Sybil's death is problematic in itself, Dorian and Lord Henry's conversation about her death is particularly jarring in its romanticization of her demise. Lord Henry, who essentially corrupts Dorian from the beginning of the novel, claims that Sybil's death is like "a tragedy that possesses artistic elements" (Wilde 98). He glamorizes her suicide by telling Dorian that he is lucky and should feel honored that Sybil "killed herself for the love of [him,]" adding that he wishes a beautiful woman would have done that for him (Wilde 98). Lord Henry suggests that there is something "beautiful about her death" as her self-slaughter represents "romance, passion, and love" (Wilde 99). Finally, he recommends that Dorian think of Sybil's "lonely death in the tawdry dressing-room" as "a strange lurid fragment of some Jacobean tragedy" (Wilde 100). Lord Henry fetishizes and glamorizes Sybil's death when he claims that her suicide is "artistic" and

compares her death to a "Jacobean tragedy" (Wilde 100).

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who also depicted dead and dying young women in his artwork and poetry, romanticized female death in his poem, "The Blessed Damozel," in which the male speaker imagines his love in heaven. He describes her as having eyes "deeper than the depth of waters stilled at even" and "hair that lay along her back...yellow like ripe corn" ("The Blessed Damozel" 3-4, 11-12). He imagines her looking down from heaven and speaking with a voice "like the voice [that] stars / had when they sang together" ("The Blessed Damozel" 59-60). Because his beloved is dead, he is able to speak for her and thus imagines her saying what he wants to hear. He pictures her longing for him and asking God to allow him to be with her in heaven. Unlike many of the other poems of the Victorian Era, the female character in this poem speaks; however, it's important to note that the words that come out of her mouth are not her own, and his description of her beauty in heaven idealizes her death and objectifies her body.

Not only did Rossetti depict dead or dying women in his poetry, but he also portrayed their demise through his paintings. One of his most famous paintings, *Beata Beatrix* (see fig. 2), features his wife Elizabeth Siddall posing as Beatrice Portinari, the beloved of the Italian poet Dante Alighieri (Orlando 621). Rossetti began this painting two years after the death of his wife, and by using Siddall as his muse, he directly compares his loss to Alighieri's (Orlando



Fig. 2. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Beata Beatrix*, 1864. Oil on canvas.

622). The painting captures a scene in which Beatrice is dying while a red bird, the messenger of death, brings her an opium poppy. Rossetti paints Beatrice with her eyes closed, her head slightly tilted back, and her lips parted, a look of ecstasy on her face. Further, the hazy, warmth that surrounds Beatrice creates an element of sensuality. By portraying Beatrice sensually, Rossetti implies that the most beautiful and romantic scene is one in which a woman dies.

Although many male artists and writers of the Victorian Age used and exploited dead and dying women through their work, Elizabeth Siddall and Christina Rossetti used their art forms as a way to challenge the exploitation of dead women as artistic inspiration. Christina Rossetti, Dante Rossetti's sister, wrote the poem "In an Artist's Studio" in which she criticizes her brother for depicting his muses as "one selfsame figure" (C. Rossetti 2). She argues that her brother's art uses the same "nameless girl" as inspiration and depicts her "not as she is but as she fills his dreams" (C. Rossetti 6). She even compares his exploitation of the models on his canvases to cannibalism or vampirism when she writes that "he feeds upon her face by day and night" (C. Rossetti 9). In this poem, Rossetti argues that her brother exploits his models and strips them of their identity by making them all "one selfsame figure" (C. Rossetti 2). Lizzie Siddall, Christina Rossetti's sister-in-law, was a model for many Pre-Raphaelite paintings, most famously in John Everett Millais' *Ophelia* in which she poses as the corpse of the Shakespearean heroine (see fig. 3). Siddall frequently posed as a dead woman in these paintings, but in her own artwork she fought against those representations. For example, in the



Fig. 3. Sir John Everett Millais, *Ophelia*, 1851. Oil on Canvas.

poem "A Silent Wood," the speaker asks nature for the time and space to sit in the "darkest shadow" and forget about being "frozen like a thing of stone" ("A Silent Wood" 5, 11). She craves a space in which she does not have to "faint or die or swoon" (Orlando 615). Similarly, in the poem "Lord May I Come?" the speaker asks to go to heaven because life seems "sad and still/like lilies in a frozen rill" ("Lord May I Come?" 16). The speakers in these poems feel trapped in a still and frozen life just as models appear to be on a canvas.

In addition to her poetry, Siddall was a visual artist. In her self-portrait (see fig. 4), she regains the subjectivity and agency that she loses in the paintings by male artists who portray her as fainting, dying, or swooning (Orlando 615). She portrays herself as strong and guarded with clothes that seem impenetrable to the male gaze. In addition, her stare suggests agency and strength, rather than passivity. This portrait stands in stark contrast to Rossetti's painting *Beata Beatrix*, in which Siddall is portrayed with a rather sensual and erotic facial expression.



Fig. 4. Elizabeth Siddall, *Self-Portrait*, 1853. Oil on canvas.

L'Inconnue de la Seine, or the "unknown woman of the Seine," is yet another disturbing example of the ways in which popular culture romanticized and eroticized dead women during the Victorian Age. In the late 1880s, the body of a young woman was pulled from the River Seine in Paris (Casale). With no signs of physical harm, the woman's death was ruled a suicide and, as was the custom of the time, her body was displayed at the mortuary in the hopes that she would be identified and claimed (Casale). Ultimately, her body was never identified. However, as her body was displayed in the windows of the mortuary,



Fig. 5. *L'Inconnue de la Seine*.

like a pretty doll for sale, one of the morticians became “entranced” by her beautiful half smile and calm expression (Casale). As if she were simply an object to be displayed as decor, the mortician had a plaster cast made of the woman’s face in an effort to immortalize her beauty before her body began to decay (see fig. 5). The “death mask” became a fixture in Parisian society as well as a model of beauty across various European countries (Casale). Artists and writers throughout Europe were also “entranced” by her beauty and used the mask as inspiration for their works. Several writers, including Richard le Gallienne, have rewritten her story, portraying her as a modern day Ophelia and romanticizing her death (Casale). Albert Camus compared her smile to the *Mona Lisa*, suggesting that her face “sparked conversation [and] inspired creativity” (Casale). In addition, others have remarked that she “looks like she’s just asleep and waiting for Prince Charming” (Casale). Al Alvarez notes in his book *The Savage God* that German actresses and models aspired to look like L’Inconnue, as her death mask “became the erotic ideal of the period” (Casale). In death, she seems to lose any sense of agency or right over her body as she is stripped of all privacy, becoming an aesthetic object to be owned, bought, and sold. She is voiceless and, as a result, unable to fight back against the exploitation of her dead body. In addition, she was unable to resist when her face was immortalized and turned into an erotic, morbid fixture for drawing rooms across Europe. Perhaps more disturbingly, L’Inconnue de la Seine was further immortalized

by Asmund Laerdal in 1955, who was tasked with creating a training aid for cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) (Grange). Because he wanted the mannequin to have a natural appearance and felt that a “female doll would seem less threatening to trainees,” he modeled its face after the mask of L’Inconnue de la Seine (Grange). Thus for over 50 years, more than 300 million people have used the dead face of L’Inconnue as an aid in CPR training, making her the “most kissed girl in the world” (Grange). The identity of L’Inconnue has been questioned over the years, and the circumstances of her death remain up for debate. Ultimately, however, she was immortalized, not as she was or as she lived, but as the men, who were inspired by her death, wished her to be.

Similar to L’Inconnue de la Seine, Evelyn McHale’s body was eroticized and glamorized after she took her own life in the late 1940s. Evelyn McHale committed suicide by jumping from the Empire State Building Observation Deck on the 86th floor (Cosgrove). After jumping from the observatory, McHale landed on a car parked beneath the building and, minutes later, the photographer Robert Wiles took a photo of her corpse (see fig. 6). In McHale’s suicide note, she wrote that she did not “want anyone in or out of [her] family to see any part of [her]” (Cosgrove). However, against her wishes, her body was and continues to be seen by millions of people. The photo was first published as a full page in the May 1947 issue of *Life* magazine (Cosgrove). Shortly thereafter, McHale’s death was hailed the “most



Fig. 6. Robert Wiles, *The Most Beautiful Suicide*, 1947. *Life* magazine.

beautiful suicide” (Cosgrove). Wiles’ photo gained an immense amount of popularity and remains one of the most well-known photographs of the twentieth century because of the way that McHale’s body is positioned on the crumpled car beneath her. Her ankles are crossed, her facial expression is calm, her feet are bare, and she clutches her necklace to her chest with a gloved hand. The photo seemed to many people like a piece of artwork. Andy Warhol even used the photo in his piece entitled *Suicide: Fallen Body* (1962). Today, nearly seven decades after the photo was taken, scholars and journalists alike are still discussing this photograph. For example, Ben Cosgrove of *Time* magazine wrote an article in 2014 in which he shows how contemporary society has remained stagnant in our fetishization of the dead female body. Not only does Cosgrove write that the photo is “visually compelling” and “downright beautiful,” but he also calls her by her first name. He claims that “it doesn’t feel right to refer to her as ‘Ms. McHale,’” perhaps implying that he feels intimately acquainted with McHale after seeing her deceased body (Cosgrove). Like the *L’Inconnue de la Seine* was said to be waiting for Prince Charming, McHale is said to be “daydreaming of her beau,” as if it is impossible for a young woman to be thinking of anything but romance (Cosgrove). Cosgrove suggests that the photo allows the public “to look one last time at Evelyn McHale, and remember her” (Cosgrove). However, Cosgrove fails to note that the photo of McHale does not show us anything about her or her life. Instead, it is simply an aesthetic representation of her self-slaughter, a sight that she specifically did not want to be seen. Similar to the *L’Inconnue de la Seine*, Evelyn McHale lost the right to control her image once she passed away and has since been eroticized and glamorized as an attractive representation of death.

The death of Ruslana Korshunova is a more contemporary example of the ways in which the dead female body is romanticized. Korshunova, a twenty-year-old model often called “The Russian Rapunzel,” jumped to her death from her New York City apartment in 2008 (Orlando 611). When Fox News reported Korshunova’s death, they played a long video from the crime scene, in which the camera zooms in on her lifeless body while blood runs from her nose to the pavement (Orlando 611). During

the broadcast, Geraldo Rivera comments that her dead body “stands in stark contrast to the fairy-tale images of the famous face and chestnut hair that made her modeling’s next big thing” (Orlando 611). Additionally, once the video was broadcast, an online comment on the video noted that “she still looks beautiful even with the blood on her mouth,” while another compared her dead body to a “wax doll” (“Fox News”). The fact that the video of Korshunova was aired on television demonstrates how the dead female body is exploited by popular culture in the twenty-first century. Similar to Evelyn McHale and *L’Inconnue de la Seine*, Korshunova is described as beautiful because of her passivity. She is unable to control the ways in which she is represented in the media and, in that way, she represents the feminine ideal.

Various advertisements and ad campaigns within the fashion industry feature dead or dying women, which demonstrates the persistence of the dead female body as a subject in art in the twenty-first century. In 2007, during an episode of the television series *America’s Next Top Model*, the models posed as dead women in the middle of gory, horrifying crime scenes (see fig. 7). The models were asked to assume the characters of dead women while simultaneously selling the clothes that they were dressed in. Essentially, they had to embody death while framing it as sexy and alluring. The judges’ comments about the photos shed light on the ways in which the fashion industry fetishizes dead young women. One of the models who was posed as if she had fallen from a building was told: “death becomes you, young lady” (Cochrane). Another model who posed at the bottom of a flight of stairs was praised

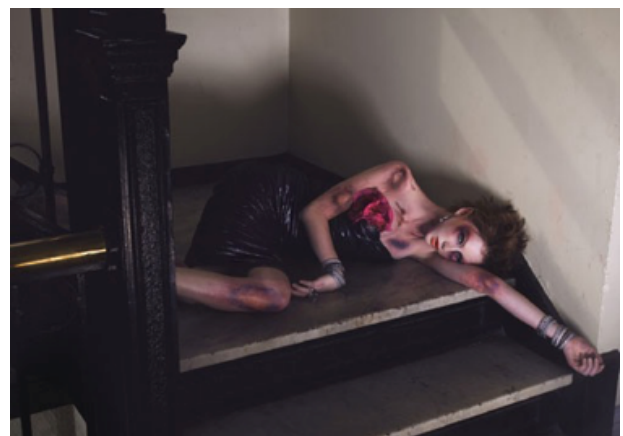


Fig. 7. *America’s Next Top Model*, 2007.



Fig. 8. *America's Next Top Model*, 2005.



Fig. 9. Duncan Quinn [Advertisement]. 2008.

for her facial expression, which was described as “very beautiful and dead” (Cochrane). In another episode, which aired in 2005, the models were asked to pose in coffins while embodying the seven deadly sins (see fig. 8). The models were dressed in revealing outfits and posed erotically in coffins, suggesting that there is something sexy about being in a grave.

America's Next Top Model is not the only example of glamorizing and fetishizing women in editorial campaigns. In one advertisement for Jimmy Choo, a model poses as a dead woman stuffed into the back of a trunk while a man digs her grave. Another advertisement in the fashion magazine *Lula* depicts a model with limp arms and legs at the edge of a canal. These campaigns, which serve the purpose of selling the clothes that the models are wearing, both depict dead, voiceless women, implying that death is “in fashion.” Another, even more disturbing advertisement, depicts male suit designer Duncan Quinn pulling on a tie that is wrapped around a partially nude model's neck (see fig. 9). The photo portrays Quinn in the act of strangling the model with a smug, confident look on his face. Since the model is dressed in lingerie, she is portrayed as an erotic object that Quinn can dominate. In essence, these advertisements suggest that the Victorian obsession with dead and dying women has persisted and that this persistence may be connected to the ways in which death, and the passivity of dead women, is portrayed as sexual and erotic.

Throughout the Victorian Age, an overwhelming majority of the art and literature that was created demonstrated an intense and morbid fascination with the death of beautiful, young women. Various literary and visual artists, including Edgar Allan Poe, Charles Baudelaire, Lord Alfred Tennyson, William Butler Yeats, Oscar Wilde, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, used dead and dying women as the inspiration behind their works. While Elizabeth Siddall and Christina Rossetti fought to combat this exploitation with their own artistic voices, this obsession and fascination with female death remains a fixture within contemporary culture. In fact, this fascination has arguably become more pervasive and aggressive with the passing of each century. Ultimately, the documentation of Evelyn McHale and Ruslana Korshunova's suicides as well as advertisements that glamorize death represent the amplification of the Victorian romanticization of female death that exists in the twenty-first century. Essentially, it seems as though the perfect woman is dead.

Works Cited

- America's Next Top Model. 2005. *Pinterest*, www.pinterest.com/pin/323344448217699830/. Accessed 04 Dec. 2016.
- America's Next Top Model. 2007. *Pinterest*, www.pinterest.com/pin/323344448217699830/. Accessed 04 Dec. 2016.

- Baudelaire, Charles. "Je T'adore à L'égal"/ "I Worship You." *Flowers of Evil and Other Works: A Dual Language Book*. Edited by Wallace Fowlie, Dover Publications, 1992, 44.
- Casale, Steven. "Eternal Beauty: The Death Mask of L'Inconnue De La Seine." *The Lineup*, n.p., 14 July 2016. Accessed 03 Dec. 2016.
- Cochrane, Kira. "How Female Corpses Became a Fashion Trend." *The Women's Blog*, Guardian News and Media, 09 Jan. 2014. Accessed 03 Dec. 2016.
- Cosgrove, Ben. "'The Most Beautiful Suicide': A Violent Death, an Immortal Photo." *Time*, 19 Mar. 2014, <http://time.com/3456028/the-most-beautiful-suicide-a-violent-death-an-immortal-photo>. Accessed 03 Dec. 2016.
- Duncan Quinn. 2008. *Trend Hunter Marketing*, www.trendhunter.com/trends/duncan-quinn-suit-ad-depicting-strangled-woman. Accessed 04 Dec. 2016.
- "Fox News Shows Extended Footage of Dead Model Ruslana Korshunova's Body," *Celebitchy*, n.p., 30 June 2008. Accessed 03 Dec. 2016.
- Grange, Jeremy. "Resusci Anne and L'Inconnue: The Mona Lisa of the Seine." *BBC News*, 16 October 2013. Accessed 03 Dec. 2016.
- Hutchisson, James M. *Poe*. Edited by James M. Hutchisson, University Press of Mississippi, 2005.
- L'Inconnue De La Seine*. N.d. Pinterest, www.pinterest.com/astruminhomine/linconnue-de-la-seine/. Accessed 04 Dec. 2016.
- Meteyard, Sidney. "I am Half Sick of Shadows," *Said the Lady of Shalott*. 1913, oil on canvas.
- Millais, John Everett. *Ophelia*. 1851, oil on canvas. Tate Britain, London. *Tate*, <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/millais-ophelia-n01506>. Accessed 01 Dec. 2016.
- Orlando, Emily J. "'That I May not Faint, or Die, or Swoon': Reviving Pre-Raphaelite Women." *Women's Studies*, vol. 38, no. 6, 2009, pp. 611-646, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00497870903021505>
- Poe, Edgar Allan. *The Portable Edgar Allan Poe*. Edited by J. Gerald Kennedy, Penguin, 2006.
- Rossetti, Christina. "In An Artist's Studio." *Genius*. N.p., 24 Apr. 2014, www.genius.com/Christina-rossetti-in-an-artists-studio-annotated. Accessed 03 Dec. 2016.
- Rossetti, Dante Gabriel. *Beata Beatrix*. 1864, oil on canvas.
- Rossetti, Dante Gabriel. "The Blessed Damozel." *Pre-Raphaelite Poetry: An Anthology*, edited by Paul Negri, Dover Publications, 2003, pp. 1-5.
- Siddall, Elizabeth. "A Silent Wood" *Lizzie Siddal*. N.p., 28 Sept. 2011, www.lizziesiddal.com/portal/a-silent-wood/. Accessed 03 Dec. 2016.
- Siddall, Elizabeth. "Lord May I Come?" *Lizzie Siddal*. N.p., 28 Sept. 2011, www.lizziesiddal.com/portal/lord-may-i-come/. Accessed 03 Dec. 2016.
- Siddall, Elizabeth. *Self-Portrait*. 1853, oil on canvas.
- Tennyson, Alfred. "700. Lady of Shalott." *Bartleby*. The Oxford Book of English Verse, www.bartleby.com/101/700.html. Accessed 03 Dec. 2016.
- Wilde, Oscar. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Edited by Robert Mighall, Penguin, 2003.
- Wiles, Robert. *The Most Beautiful Suicide*. 1947, photo, *Life* magazine.
- Yeats, William Butler. "He Wishes His Beloved Were Dead." *Poetry Foundation*, www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/57305. Accessed 03 Dec. 2016.