



The New Oxford Book of Victorian Verse (Oxford Books of Verse)

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One of the great ages of poetry speaks for itself in this compendious anthology: the variety and power of Victorian verse, the innovation and creativity with which poets both reflected and resisted the attitudes of their era are keenly demonstrated. *The New Oxford Book of Victorian Verse* brings out in its introduction by Christopher Ricks, and brings home in its selections that the old pleasure of condescending to Victorian poetry is paltry in comparison with the ever-new pleasures of being delighted, moved, and touched by it. Ricks shows how misguided this narrow and pejorative view of Victorianism has been, affecting our conception of the kind of poetry appropriate to the age. By taking a simple definition of Victorian verse, as that written during the reign of Victoria, he demonstrates what a great variety of poetry and poets the period produced. Dramatic monologue, nonsense verse, light verse, nature poetry, and the "poetry of feeling," were all written at this time; and alongside such great figures as Browning, Tennyson, Swinburne and Hopkins, we also find the likes of Thomas Hardy, Emily Bronte, John Clare, Matthew Arnold, William Barnes, Oscar Wilde, and Edward Lear.

An unprecedented feature of the anthology is the respect shown to the integrity of the 560 poems: poems are here printed in their entirety, excerpts being made only of those lines to which the poet gave a distinct autonomy. And four substantial masterpieces are reproduced in full: Lewis Carroll's *The Hunting of the Snark*, Edward Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, Christina G. Rossetti's *Goblin Market*, and Arthur Hugh Clough's superb verse-novel of love, society, and revolution, *Amours de Voyage*.

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