

## Dante Gabriel Rossetti: “The Blessed Damozel”

- I. Background: Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood
  - A. Dante Gabriel Rossetti was both a painter and a poet
  - B. Along with William Holman Hunt and John Everett Millais, he founded the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in 1848
  - C. This artistic movement sought a return to the simpler and more natural style of the medieval period, before Raphael and the Renaissance movement
  - D. Characteristics of Pre-Raphaelite art
    1. A vivid and sensuous use of color
    2. A great deal of detail
    3. Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s 1861 sensation novel, *Lady Audley’s Secret*, includes a memorably whimsical description of Pre-Raphaelite art
  - E. Several female models appear in numerous examples of Pre-Raphaelite art
  - F. Jane Morris, wife of William Morris, appeared in several of Rossetti’s paintings
  - G. Rossetti was in love with Jane Morris, lived with another woman he didn’t love, and was married to a woman who committed suicide
- II. “The Blessed Damozel”
  - A. It was written when Rossetti was only 19
  - B. It features very painterly detail, and Rossetti later created a painting based on it
    1. In the painting the blessed damozel (damsel), surrounded by angels in heaven, gazes longingly toward her lover on earth
    2. The lover gazes up from the bottom of the painting
  - C. Rossetti saw the poem as a response to Edgar Allan Poe’s *The Raven*
  - D. It fuses the spiritual and the sensuous
  - E. Earthly and heavenly time are juxtaposed, as what seems only a day for her since her death, is ten years on earth
  - F. The blessed damozel imagines being reunited with her lover when he joins her in heaven
  - G. She plans to ask the Virgin Mary and Christ for permission for the two to live together, as they were on earth
  - H. This vision of eternal love seems to quiet her longing somewhat
  - I. She is able to accept that she must wait a bit longer for her lover to join her
  - J. However, the final image of the poem is of the damozel weeping