

Dante Gabriel Rossetti wrote the poem *The Blessed Damozel* between 1875 and 1878, and he painted a picture with the same name.

I am going to analyse part of the poem, the part I found at [www.victorianweb.org](http://www.victorianweb.org) but the poem is more extensive. The poem is separated on paragraphs of five verses each one. The title talks about a pure woman, I think that it refers to a virgin woman. The poem and the picture show a pure woman in heaven, she is a young woman and it is probably that she had had a premature death. She is leaned in a bar and it seems that she is looking at the earth with an unhappy expression, she is leaned in a bar. The poet misses her and remembers her, he tells us how the woman was, he says she had deep eyes and blond hair. He describes her and when we look at the picture we see that the woman is dressed as the poet says. But in the poem we imagine that who loves the woman is the author, and we hope that the man who appears in the picture were him, but we can see a gentleman with a sword, this image does not correspond with the idea that we have about a writer, because a writer must appear with daily clothes and probably he must wear a fountain pen not a sword. I think that the writer shows himself as a gentleman because a lady would not love a poet, she would love a man that seems like her blue prince. The woman is looking at her gentleman and he lies on the earth looking at her too, and probably they miss each other, because they are separated. The angels that appear between the lovers are the limit that separate them, the angels represent purity and it seems that they are laughing or making grimaces at the lovers, they are “kissing the air”. In the “*The Divine Comedy*” by Dante Alighieri, the angels are in the circle before where the virgin Maria is, and they are the chorus of God, the lady is with them and I think that she is nearly the Virgin Maria because of her purity, and because the poet idealises her, he thinks she is a celestial woman. The lovers at the top of the picture represent the idealised love, the woman and the gentleman would like to kiss and hug each other, but this can only occur in dreams and because the image of the lovers together is blurred.

“The gold bar of heaven” (line 2) represents the proximity to God and that the woman is on a balcony from where she can look down at the earth, and she can see her love.

“Her eyes were..... at even” (lines 3 and 4), and when we look at the picture we can see her unhappy expression, these verses tell us that the lady is crying and her look is deep because she has lived an experience that she did not expect, for example a premature death and the separation from her love.

“She had three lilies in her hand” (line 4) represents Jesus Christ because they have the same colour of His cloak. “And the stars in her hair

were seven” ( line 5) this verse has a religious meaning too, because the number seven: God created the world in 7 days, the mortal sins are 7. And when we look at the picture we can see that the seven stars ( celestial meaning because the stars are in heaven) form a crown around her head, a crown as the one we can see when we look at any image of the Virgin Maria.

“ But a white rose of Mary’s gift” (line 8), the colour white represents purity and virginity, and Virgin Mary was who gave her the rose.

“ Her hair that lay along her back” ( line 10), when the hair is laying along the back of a woman, it is a sign of femininity, and I think that when a woman had her hair laying was because she was unmarried.

“ One of God’s choristers” ( line 13) as we can see at the “ *The Divine Comedy*”, the chorus of God is composed by the angels, and they are in the circle before God. When we look at the picture we can see that the woman is with three angels.

From verse 16 to verse 23 the poet talks about the time the lady is in heaven, but the lovers feel that it has passed more time. In the picture we can see the expression of suffering that they have, they miss each other. She seems to be crying and he lies on the floor and he is looking at heaven.

“ She scarce could see the sun” ( line 29), she is near God and God is in the last circle that is near the sun, because of that she probably can see the sun.

From verse 30 to verse 35 we can read about the desperation of the man because he has lost his love, he sees darkness around him, and because of that he lies on the floor, and all around him is painted with dark colours.

From verse 36 to verse 41 is a description of the image at the top of the picture, the lovers are together, they kiss and hug each other, and they are over the woman, and because of that they are nearer to God, it can be expressed as the true love that is better and can aspire to be near of God. Another explanation is that this image is a dream, and our dreams are always situated over us. The image of the lovers together in the picture is blurred as a dream or feeling, or it can be a vision of the future, when the gentleman will die, he will go to heaven with the lady and they will be together at the end of their life, when they were death they will be together.

I do not know if the picture was made first or it was the poem, but if we read the poem and then we look at the picture, we realise that the poem explains all the elements of the painting. I think that this pre-raphaelite art of combining poetry and painting is good to understand the poem and the picture, but they must be together.