

Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830-94)

2 *Ballad*

‘Soft white lamb in the daisy meadow,
Come hither and play with me,
For I am lonesome and I am tired
Underneath the apple tree.’

‘There’s your husband if you’re lonesome, lady, 5
And your bed if you want for rest:
And your baby for a playfellow
With a soft hand for your breast.’

‘Fair white dove in the sunshine,
Perched on the ashen bough, 10
Come and perch by me and coo to me
While the buds are blowing now.’

‘I must keep my nestlings warm, lady,
Underneath my downy breast:
There’s your baby to coo and crow to you 15
While I brood upon my nest.’

‘Faint white rose, come lie on my heart,
Come lie there with your thorn:
For I’ll be dead at the vesper bell
And buried the morrow morn.’ 20

‘There’s blood on your lily breast, lady,
Like roses when they blow,
And there’s blood upon your little hand
That should be white as snow:
I will stay amid my fellows 25
Where the lilies grow.’

‘But it’s oh my own own little babe
That I had you here to kiss,
And to comfort me in the strange next world

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Though I slighted you so in this.' 30

'You shall kiss both cheek and chin, mother,
And kiss me between the eyes,
Or ever the moon is on her way
And the pleasant stars arise:
You shall kiss and kiss your fill, mother, 35
In the nest of Paradise.'

1854

(From *The Poetical Works of Christina Georgina Rossetti*.
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