

Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830-94)

5 *Sister Maude*

Who told my mother of my shame,
Who told my father of my dear?
Oh who but Maude, my sister Maude,
Who lurked to spy and peer.

Cold he lies, as cold as stone, 5
With his clotted curls about his face:
The comeliest corpse in all the world
And worthy of a queen's embrace.

You might have spared his soul, sister,
Have spared my soul, your own soul too: 10
Though I had not been born at all,
He'd never have looked at you.

My father may sleep in Paradise,
My mother at Heaven-gate:
But sister Maude shall get no sleep 15
Either early or late.

My father may wear a golden crown,
My mother a crown may win;
If my dear and I knocked at Heaven-gate
Perhaps they'd let us in: 20
But sister Maude, oh sister Maude,
Bide *you* with death and sin.

(From Christina Rossetti. *Goblin Market and Other Poems*.
London: Macmillan, 1862)