

# Investigate! The poetry of Christina

## Rossetti: Good Friday

### Investigate! Good Friday

#### Investigating *Good Friday*

- ❖ What aspects of *Good Friday* can you identify as encouraging, or potentially encouraging?
- ❖ How may a reading of the poem help an individual who is struggling with his or her emotions?
- ❖ What aspects of the poem do you find difficult to grasp?
- ❖ What associations do you have with the idea of a shepherd?
  - Are these associations met in the poem?
- ❖ What associations do you have with the idea of sheep?
  - Are these associations met in the poem?
- ❖ Why do you think that the speaker would rather resemble a sheep than a stone?
- ❖ Why do you think that the speaker is unable to experience the crucifixion in the same way as the women, Peter or the thief?
  - What is the effect of alluding to the people described in the crucifixion narrative?

#### Investigating language and tone

- ❖ The speaker addresses Christ in 'O Christ' (l. 2)
  - What is the effect of the 'O' on this line?

- How does it contribute to the tone of the poem?

#### Investigating structure and versification

- ❖ Read through the poem aloud
  - Identify any links between the words that are stressed and the emotion they express
- ❖ Look at the shape of the poem on the page
  - What do you notice?

#### Investigating imagery and symbolism

- ❖ If Christ can 'smite a rock', what else does the speaker suggest he is able to do?
  - How does this make the speaker feel?
- ❖ Circle the imagery and symbolism used in the poem
  - Which images do you find the most surprising and why?
- ❖ Why do you think that the word 'Blood' is capitalised?
  - What is the effect of the description of it dripping down from the cross?

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### Investigating themes

- ❖ How much do the speaker's ideas about him/herself change over the course of *Good Friday*?
  - ❖ How does s/he perceive him/herself at the end of the poem?
- How far can the poem be described as one of transformation?