

Investigate!

The Convent Threshold

Investigating *The Convent Threshold*

- ❖ What are the advantages to presenting the narrative in the form of a dramatic monologue?
- ❖ How is the speaker of the poem represented?
- ❖ What are your associations with the idea of a convent?
 - Are these associations met in the poem?

Investigating language and tone

- ❖ Re-read the poem and think about the voice of the speaker
 - How sympathetic does she make you feel about her plight?
 - How do you think that Rossetti invites the reader to perceive her?
 - With irony?
 - Sympathy?
 - Compassion?
 - Think especially about the terms in which the speaker describes the relationship she has just renounced
- ❖ What is the effect of the allusions to music in the poem?
 - How do these allusions contribute to the tone?

Investigating structure and versification

- ❖ Note down some examples of caesurae that contribute to a change in the pace at which the poem is read
 - What do you think the effect is of having a full stop after the word 'thunder' (l. 133)?
- ❖ How do you think that the structure of the poem contributes to the narrative?
- ❖ What do you think is the significance of presenting the narrative as a poem?
- ❖ How would it differ if it was written as a piece of prose?

Investigating imagery and symbolism

- ❖ Consider the image of lead in l. 118,122.
 - What associations do you have with the idea of lead?
 - How are these associations met in the description that the speaker gives?
- ❖ What images or symbols in *The Convent Threshold* surprised you?
 - What effect do you think that Rossetti was trying to create by including them?

Investigate! The poetry of Christina

Rossetti: *The Convent Threshold*

Investigating themes

- ❖ Can you identify any other themes or significant ideas that run through the poem?
- ❖ Think about the expressions of movement that occur throughout the poem
How do you think that these expressions add to the overall meaning and link certain ideas together?

