

## The Romance of the Lyric in Nineteenth-Century Women's Poetry: Experiments in Form

Lee Christine O'Brien



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*The Romance of the Lyric in Nineteenth-Century Women's Poetry: Experiments in Form* offers a new account of the nature of the lyric as nineteenth-century women poets developed the form. It offers fresh assessments of the imaginative and aesthetic complexity of women's poetry. The monograph seeks to redefine the range and cultural significance of women's writing using the work of poets who have not, heretofore, been part of critical accounts of nineteenth-century lyric poetry. These new voices are set beside new readings of the poetry of established figures: for example, Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market* and Augusta Webster's "Medea in Athens" and "Circe." The monograph draws substantially on the poetry of Rosamund Marriott Watson – who was lost to literary history before the restoration of her oeuvre through the scholarly and critical work of Professor Linda K. Hughes – to make the case that once neglected and lost voices provide new ways of determining the cultural centrality of women and the poetry they produced in one of the richest periods of poetic experimentation in the Western literary tradition. This monograph contends that Watson's poetry and prose provide new ways of analyzing the complex and frequently transgressive nature of the lyric engagement of women with folklore and myth and with the growing understanding in the nineteenth century of the fragmented, fluid self in general and of the writer in particular.

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