Christina Rossetti was born in London, one of four children of Italian parents on December 5, 1830. Her father was the poet Gabriele Rossetti; her brother Dante Gabriel Rossetti also became a poet and a painter.   
  
Rossetti’s first poems were written in 1842 and published for her family. In 1850, under the pseudonym Ellen Alleyne, she contributed seven poems to the *The Germ,* which was founded by her brother William Michael and his friends.

Christina Rosetti had three offers of marriage in her lifetime – all of which she turned down for religious reasons.   
  
By the 1880s, recurrent bouts of a thyroid disorder, made Rossetti an invalid, and ended her attempts to work as a governess. While the illness restricted her social life, she continued to write poems.   
  
In 1891, Rossetti developed cancer, of which she died in London on December 29, 1894.   
  
Rossetti is best known for her romantic, religious and children’s poetry. Her poetry is marked by symbolism, intense feelings and vibrant imagery.

Color  
BY [CHRISTINA ROSSETTI](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/christina-rossetti)

*What is pink? a rose is pink*

*By a fountain's brink.*

*What is red? a poppy's red*

*In its barley bed.*

*What is blue? the sky is blue*

*Where the clouds float thro'.*

*What is white? a swan is white*

*Sailing in the light.*

*What is yellow? pears are yellow,*

*Rich and ripe and mellow.*

*What is green? the grass is green,*

*With small flowers between.*

*What is violet? clouds are violet*

*In the summer twilight.*

*What is orange? Why, an orange,*

*Just an orange!*Source: *The Golden Book of Poetry* (1947)