

A Bibliography of 19th Century American Women Poets

by Larry R. Michaels

Introduction

Most of the women poets of the 19th century have been neglected or almost completely forgotten. As the century progressed, women were increasingly given the opportunity to publish a greater abundance of poetry than ever before. Because poetry was so popular and so much was published, some of the best writers, as well as many excellent individual poems, were lost in the haystack of such great volume; and when the century ended, except for Emily Dickinson, they disappeared with the changes in popular taste.

More recently, however, especially in the case of Sarah Piatt (whose more extensive bibliography is still being compiled), some are finding a new audience of 21st century readers, perhaps more than in the period in which they were first published. Also, beginning in the 1990s, several fine anthologies of women poets have been published by Cheryl Walker, Paula Bennett, Karen Kilcup, and others, which have renewed interest in some of these writers, called attention to particular works that can still be appreciated by current readers, and hopefully will lead to more research of the neglected authors included here. It is certainly a fertile field to be cultivated.

Sources

The bibliographies in this collection were compiled from various sources, including *American Women Writers*, 1979; *Notable American Women*, 1971; *American National Biography*, 1999; *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, *BAL* for a few; the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* for late-century authors; *Poetry by Women to 1900*, Davis & Joyce, 1991; Griswold, Read, Stedman, and other early anthologies; indexes of leading 19th century magazines; microfilm searches of periodicals, and other sources listed in the Biography and Criticism sections of the bibliographies. Most of this research was done in the 1990s, while locating poems and other works by Sarah Piatt, but it is hoped, even with much new material now online, that these detailed bibliographies can still provide helpful information for students and scholars of these poets, especially some of the more obscure writers.

Selection

The poets included here were selected for a variety of reasons. It is intended that the whole century be represented, from some who wrote in the early years who had fewer places to publish, to others such as Cone and Peabody who were popular in the late 1800s and continued their careers well into the 20th century. Dora Goodale, for example, began as a traditional child-poet in the late 1870s, but wrote some exceptional modern poetry until after World War II. Others should be remembered for producing a very original work that was ahead of its time, like Brooks' "Zophiel," Oakes-Smith's "The Sinless Child," or even Whitney's "Mother Goose for Grown Folks." Phoebe Cary and Mary Ainge De Vere used humor. Beers and Allen (as well as Julia Ward Howe) became famous for one poem that achieved great popularity. Poets like Moulton and Fields were better known for their relationships with other

writers than for their own individual works. Fanny Osgood is a delightful example of the first half of the century, and along with Sarah Helen Whitman has an important connection with Poe. Guiney, Stoddard, and Aldrich (who died in her twenties) were poets of talent who created a significant body of work that deserves further study and recognition.

Not included are a number of popular women writers, such as Alice Cary, Lydia Sigourney, Julia Ward Howe, Lucy Larcom, Rose Terry Cooke, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Lizette Woodworth Reese, Harriet Spofford, or Helen Hunt Jackson, who can readily be found in other sources, or else are better known as prose writers. Except for Dickinson, most of the poets that are included here have had little recent attention, which hopefully might tempt a current researcher to approach a fresh field of study.

Format

The sections in each bibliography are listed in chronological order of publication. The first section lists as customary the writer's published books under the heading of separate works. The following section listing periodical publications is perhaps the most helpful, because many of these sources are not well known or are difficult to locate. Appearances in anthologies, which follow, often indicate the poet's overall or lasting popularity. The next section lists reviews, if any, of the poet's work. A biography and criticism section concludes each bibliography.

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