**GOBLIN MARKET**- Christina Rossetti

Poet Christina Rossetti was born in 1830 in England. Christina became one of the finest poet Victorian age. She was the author of numerous books of poetry, including Goblin Market and other Poems (1862), The Prince’s Progress (1866), A Pageant (1881), and The Face of the Deep (1882). Christina Rossetti was educated at home. Christina was also closely associated with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. She wrote occasional poems and essays for the Pre-Raphaelite journal, The Germ. Encouraged by her family, she eventually published a collection of poetry, Goblin Market and Other Poems, in 1862. Christina Rossetti was never an official member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Rossetti’s most famous poem, [**Goblin Market**](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44996/goblin-market), lusciously described fruits represent the temptations of self-indulgence and pleasure. The genre of narrative that combines fantasy with moral allegory was an important one for Rossetti, and she employed it in more-accomplished poems such as **Goblin Market**. Some folks like to read Goblin **Market** as just being about female heroism and sisterhood, and stop there. But you can also read it as an allegory about bad markets and bad investments. Or you could read "Goblin Market" as a scathing criticism of the way women were objectified and treated as commodities on a marriage market during the Victorian period. You could also read it as a poem about sexual purity. Goblin Market carries the theme of themes of temptation, sacrifice and salvation.

**Goblin Market** is about two sisters, one of whom gets sick after eating bad goblin fruit, and is healed because of her sister's bravery.

**Lines 1-4**

The poem opens with a market scene, where the fruit sellers come for business both in the morning as well as in the evening. It is surprising that the voice of the fruit sellers are only heard by the women and the question lies whether the voice was not heard by the men.

**Lines 5-16**

There were varieties of fruit brought for sale. There were also rare kind of fruits which were not common in use. **Quinces** are a fruit from the eastern Mediterranean that look like pears, but are too sour to eat unless they are properly cooked. **Unpecked cherries** are fresh and perfect cherries that have not been pecked by birds. **Bloom-down-cheeked peaches** are another category of fruit covered with furr of peas. **Mulberries** are fruits of hot and tropical region. **Crab-apples** are just a kind of bitter apples. **Dewberries** are small in size like blackberries.

The surprising part is that Goblins have all sorts of fruits of different seasons in the same market which was not possible in 19th century. As 19th century did not have the storage process like 21st century.

**Lines 17-24**

 Morning till evening these Goblins continuously sell fruits. They even ask the maids to come and try with help of tasting. Bullaces, greengages, and Damsons are different varieties of plum. The goblin men assure the maids that their fruit is sweet and sound, or healthy – at least, to the eye. Does that mean that the fruit could be rotten in the middle? They keep repeating; come and buy. There only aim to sell the fruits to the maidens. Laura and Lizzie are sisters. Every evening, Laura and Lizzie sit together next to a stream or a brook enjoying the cool pleasant weather after bearing the heat of the day. They pay attention to sounds coming from the market. The clasp each other and their hands are tingling to have the fruits. But irrespective of desire to have the fruit they try to control themselves by not purchasing the fruit. They were suspicious about the quality of the fruit. Describing the fruit as having **hungry thirsty roots** makes it sound scary, like something from a bad horror movie.

**Lines 32-39**

But something embarrasses them: Laura bows her head when she hears them, and Lizzie blushes. It's not clear whether Laura bows her head in order to hear the goblin men more clearly, or hearing them embarrasses her, so she bows her head when she hears them. Both of the girls clasp each other closely and caution each other. It's not clear what they are cautioning each other about. They both have tingling cheeks as they hear the goblin men calling. Why does the sound of a fruit market make them so uncomfortable? It is also not clear if their hands were itching to grab some fruit. Their **finger tips** are **tingling.**

**Lines 40-47**

Laura asks Lizzie to lie closer to her, and then pricks up her head. But even as she perks up, she warns Lizzie that they shouldn't even look at the goblins. Further she cautions not to buy their fruit, because who knows where the fruit came from? The goblins just call for them to **come buy** again as they go past down the glen or narrow valley.

**Lines 48-63**

Lizzie warns Laura not to sneak peeks at the goblin men, and covers her own eyes tightly. Lizzie covers her eyes as not to look at the goblins. She feels the eye trying to peek without her permission. She must really be deeply tempted to look at the goblins. But Laura doesn't pay attention. She keeps looking and gives Lizzie a whispered description of what she sees. The little men are heading down the valley – each of them carrying some kind of container for the fruit. One of them is even carrying a heavy golden dish. Laura is amazed by the sight of the goblin men and their fruit. She remarks on how luscious the grapes look, and thinks about how warm the wind must be where the grapes are grown to get them so fat and juicy.

**Lines 64-80**

Lizzie doesn't want to hear about the luscious grapes or anything else. She refuses to listen over and over again. She warns Laura that the goblins’ gifts are evil. Then Lizzie sticks her fingers in her ears so that she won't be able to hear her sister's descriptions or the goblins' calls, and runs away with her eyes shut. Don't try this at home, you'll probably run into something. Meanwhile, Laura stays by the side of the stream to watch the procession of the goblins. She is described as curious and wondering. She just wants to see more of them. Before, she described the goblins as **little men**, but now the description gets pretty crazy. According to Laura, they all have body parts like different animals. And some of those animals come from places far from England. The wombat is a marsupial from Australia. Obtuse is an odd way of describing a wombat. Are wombats particularly obtuse, or dull and stupid? A ratel is an animal from South Africa that looks like a badger. None of them is the same. Each of the goblins is unique. Even their voices sound like different animals, but it sounds pleasant. Laura even thinks that their dove- like voice sounds full of love.

**Lines 81-86**

Laura is craning her neck to see the goblin men better, and the poet compares her to a swan leaning out of the rushes in a stream. Then she is compared to a lily that leans over a beck or a brook. Then she is compared to a delicate kind of tree branch on a moonlit night. Finally, she's compared to a ship that's just leaving dock. The ship starts to move forward when the anchor is pulled up and all the lines are in. The stanza ends with the words, when its last restraint is gone. This phrase refers to the ship that Laura is being compared to. It literally means that the anchor is up and the ship is untied and ready to go. But this line could also suggest that Laura's guard is down, she is unrestrained. Anything could happen.

**Lines 115-122**

Laura doesn't want there to be any misunderstanding, so she blurts out that she doesn't have any money, so taking any fruit would be to purloin, or to steal. She says that she has neither copper nor silver to pay for the fruit. Instead of just saying, I don't have any gold, either, she says that the only gold she has is on the furze, which is a kind of evergreen shrub that has **gold-colored flowers**. She politely calls the goblins **Good Folk**. Folk is capitalized, which could be a reference to old British myths that describe elfish, magical people as **Fair Folk** or **Good Folk.**

**Lines 123-128**

The goblins point out that Laura has plenty of **gold** on her head. Her blond hair, apparently, counts as gold money at the goblin market. So the goblins ask Laura to give them a **golden curl** in exchange for some fruit. Laura cuts a **precious golden lock**, but cries while doing it. Just as her hair is **precious** and **golden** like gold coin, her tear is compared to a **rare pearl.** So Laura's various body parts are being compared to different precious minerals and gemstones. Having traded in that **precious golden curl**, Laura starts sucking the goblin **fruit globes**.

**Lines 129-133**

The goblin fruit is tasty. Laura thinks that the fruit is **sweeter than honey and stronger than wine.** Does that mean she's getting drunk or intoxicated on goblin fruit? She seems to be getting excited about that goblin fruit. The fruit juice is **clearer than water**. What kind of fruit has juice that is **clearer than water**? What kind of fruit is this? Laura had never tasted anything like this before. The poet then asks how the taste of the fruit could ever **cloy**, or get old. But just by asking the question, the poet suggests that the fruit could indeed **cloy** after a while.

**Lines 134-136**

Laura keeps **sucking** on the fruit the goblins give her. It's so tasty that she can't stop. The word **sucked** is repeated three times in line 134, possibly to emphasize that Laura just can't help herself from tasting the fruit. If you think that these lines are starting to sound kind of erotic, you're not alone. It's hard to avoid reading these lines as sexual. We're reminded that the fruit she is **sucking** comes from an unknown orchard. Laura just keeps sucking until she is physically exhausted. Her **lips were sore**.

**Lines 137-140**

Once Laura is done with the sucking, she tosses the **rinds** and fruit cores aside, pausing to pick up a single **kernel stone**. Laura is so dazed that she can't tell whether it's night or day as she heads home by herself. It appears that those goblin fruits were laced with something nasty.

**Lines 141-146**

When Laura gets home, Lizzie meets her at the front gate to scold her for hanging out with the goblins. Lizzie reminds her that **twilight** is a bad time for maidens, or unmarried young women. Is twilight less dangerous for married women and for men? That's what Lizzie seems to be implying. Just as the goblin's cries were only heard by the **maids** in line two, this line seems to suggest that **twilight** is especially dangerous for maidens.

**Lines 147-152**

Lizzie then reminds Laura about what happened to a girl named **Jeanie**. Apparently Jeanie listened to the goblins' calls in the **moonlight** and took their fruit as **gifts**. Jeanie ate all the fruit that goblins gave her and wore the flowers they had picked from the bowers, or shady corners of a garden. It's interesting that she uses the word **bowers** to describe the place where those **flowers** had been **plucked**, because **bowers** can also mean a woman's private bedroom. Having **flowers** plucked out of a woman's private bedroom sounds an awful lot like Jeanie lost her virginity during this exchange with the goblins.

**Lines 153-162**

Lizzie continues with Jeanie's story. Although she ate the goblins' fruits in the **moonlight** , she started to **pine away** during the **noonlight**. After her fruit binge, Jeanie starts to get sick and pine away. She looks everywhere for the goblins and their crazy-good fruit, but can't find them, so she loses her adolescence away and ages prematurely. Then she fell or died, at the time of the first snow. The word fell has other meaning, too. A fallen woman during the Victorian period is one who has lost her sexual purity. Lizzie reminds Laura that even the grass won't grow on Jeanie's grave. Lizzie tried planting flowers on the grave, but they won't bloom. Lizzie wraps up her lecture by repeating that Laura shouldn't **loiter** after dark near the goblin market unless she wants to end up like Jeanie.

**Lines 163-169**

Laura tells Lizzie not to worry. Laura tells her sister that she ate lots of fruit and is still hungry for more, but not to worry. She says that tomorrow night she'll go and buy more. It's like she is telling her sister not to worry, because she can stop her want.

**Lines 170-183**

Laura starts going on and on about the fruit she tasted. She promises to bring some back for Lizzie. She lists all the awesome **plums, cherries, figs** etc that she has eaten. She can't seem to stop raving about them, especially about the **velvet nap**, or **peach fuzz**, on the peaches, and the pellucid, or translucent grapes. Laura wonders where is the awesome place where such delicious fruit could grow.

**Lines 184-191**

Lizzie and Laura lie down to go to bed together. The poet compares the two of them to lots of different things as they cuddle up together. The girls are like **two pigeons** that are sharing a nest as they curl up in their canopy bed. But the poet can't seem to decide on one analogy. They're not just like pigeons; they're also just like two flowers coming off of one **stem**. Another comparison: they're like two flakes of snow. Finally, the two girls are compared to sceptres made out of ivory **with gold** on the tips. This is the strangest comparison yet. The girls are ivory because their skin is very fair and white, and the **gold** on the **tips** is their golden hair. But why compare two young women to sceptres or wands for awful kings? Both the flower and the snow comparisons suggest that the girls are both equally pure and innocent. The long list of comparisons emphasizes that the two girls look almost identical, like two peas in a pod. But there is some irony here we know that the two girls aren't the same anymore. Laura has tasted the goblin fruit, and Lizzie hasn't.

**Lines 192-198**

As the girls sleep, everything is silent around them. It seems that nature too wants them to sleep well, the **wind** sings them a lullaby. **Owls and bats** don't fly too near, for fear of disturbing the girls' sleep. They sleep all cuddled up, **cheek to cheek** in their bed.

**Lines 199-214**

The next morning, the girls wake up together and start going about their usual morning chores. They were as busy as bees, and sweet. Laura and Lizzie apparently live by themselves in a country cottage. They have to bring in the honey from the beehives, milk the cows, clean the house, make **cakes,** churn the cream into butter, whip the cream, feed the chickens, and finally, sit and sew. The long list of chores suggests good, wholesome work. In other words, Laura and Lizzie are busy with domestic, household tasks, most of which involve preparing good, wholesome food, not like those dangerous goblin fruits. Once the major morning chores are done, they sit and sew together, and chat as modest maidens should. They do not gossip about boys – they appear to be **modest and maidenly**. Lizzie doesn't have anything to hide because she has done nothing wrong, so she chats away with an open heart. But Laura is absent minded because she is still daydreaming about the goblin fruits. Lizzie is warbling, or singing to herself like a bird, just because she is happy and it's a beautiful day out, but Laura can't stop wishing for nightfall so that she could get some more fruits from goblins.

**Lines 215-218**

Evening time Laura and Lizzie head down to the brook to fill their **pitchers** with water. Lizzie is calm, or **placid,** as usual, but Laura is all hot and bothered, like a leaping flame.

**Lines 219-227**

After they gathered the water they needed, Lizzie pauses to pick some flowers. Lizzie also takes the time to notice the beautiful sunset, it makes the distant **crags or cliffs**, glow. Then Lizzie reminds Laura that it's time to go home. They are the last maidens out, and it's not good for young women to loiter by the brook after sunset. Even the squirrels, **beasts and birds** have all gone to their nest as night has approached. Laura is not interested in the sunset, the flowers, or the **beasts and birds**. She can't enjoy the beauty of nature that Lizzie appreciates. Laura **loiters** along the stream, making up excuses for staying. She says the bank of the brook is too steep to climb back up with the pitcher of water.

**Lines 228-234**

Laura tells Lizzie that it's okay to stay out because, it's not that late yet, and besides it's not cold. Meanwhile, she is straining to hear the customary cry of the goblins hawking their fruit as they come through the valley. She has heard it every night since forever, but for some reason she can't hear it tonight, with its **iterated**, or repeated **jingle**.

**Lines 235-241**

Laura is straining to hear, and craning her neck for a glimpse of the goblins, but can't see a single one, let alone the hordes that always used to come through the valley. It's not clear why Laura can't hear the goblins it looks that once you have eaten the fruit, you can't hear or see the goblins again.

**Lines 242-252**

Lizzie tries to coax Laura to come back to the house, because she can hear the goblins coming. She doesn't want to look at the goblins. The stars are out, and it's getting really dark. Besides, what if it starts raining? They would get soaked. And then what if they would get lost in the dark? Better to go home now, right?

**Lines 253-259**

Laura freaks out when Lizzie tells her that she can hear the goblins. She wonders why can Lizzie hear them, while she can't. Does that mean she won't be able to eat anymore of that tasty, tasty goblin fruit? It is still not clear why Laura can't hear the goblins anymore, and it is obscure.

**Lines 260-268**

Laura is so depressed when she finds out that she has been cut off from that delicious, drug-like goblin fruit. She gets all weak **tree of life** gets droopy. Laura doesn't say anything to Lizzie about what's upsetting her, she just **trudges** home and goes straight to bed and sulks, like any teenager might do. The desire she feels for the goblin fruit is described in almost erotic terms her passionate yearning and baulked. Laura cries and cries, and doesn't sleep.

**Lines 269-280**

Time passes, it's just day after day, night after night. Laura still yearns for the goblin fruit, and still can't even hear the goblin men as they pass. The sullen silence of line 271 could have a double meaning. Laura could not hear the goblin men, and everything is silent around her, and she is silent herself, in that she hasn't talked to Lizzie what the problem is. Even though she kept watch, Laura could not hear or see the goblin men. By the time of the next full moon, Laura's hair suddenly goes gray. Apparently, eating the goblin fruit somehow tied Laura's life to the moon, so that by the time the moon wanes away, Laura will die.

**Lines 281-285**

Finally, Laura remembered that she had saved a **kernel stone**, or seed, from the goblin fruit she had eaten. She tries planting it in a nice, warm spot in their garden. After all, she figures, if she can't find her dealer, she might as well try to grow her own. But even though she waters it with tears, it doesn't take root. She thinks that salty tears are enough to start a plant from seed.

**Lines 286-292**

The fruit plant never grew. Laura can't stop dreaming about the fruit, but it's like a **traveller** who sees mirages of water in a **desert**. None of it is real, but her dreams make her withdrawal symptoms even worse.

**Lines 293-298**

Laura stops doing her chores around the house, the chores that she and Lizzie used to do together back in Stanza 9.Now Laura just sits by the chimney listlessly and mopes. She also stops eating which is not a good sign and somewhere affects her health.

**299-311**

Lizzie hates to see Laura wasting her time, and could not, help her out. It's also driving her bonkers that Laura won't tell her what's wrong. Lizzie can tell that something is wrong, of course, but not to share her sister's pain is hard for her. She can still hear the goblin men, even though Laura can't. They are still out there, shouting come buy, come buy, every morning and evening. Lizzie wants to go and buy some fruits for her sister, but is afraid of paying too dear. **Dear** is a British-English word for **expensive**, so Lizzie's afraid of paying too high a price, either literally, in terms of the money the fruit would cost, or figuratively, in terms of the cost to her own health and happiness. It's not made totally clear, but it seems like Lizzie's probably more worried about the figurative cost to her health.

**Lines 312-319**

Lizzie can't forget what happened to Jeanie, the other young woman who tried eating the goblin fruit and ended up dead. She thinks that Jeanie would have been married by now. But she couldn't wait for the joys brides hope to have, and ate the goblin fruit and died in her gay prime. The joys brides hope to have probably refer to sex. Jeanie died in the winter, around the time of the first **glazing rime**, which is a kind of hard, dense frost, and around the time of the **first snow-fall**.

**Lines 320-328**

Finally, Laura seems so close to death and Lizzie can't afford to wait any longer. She is no longer concerned with the right and wrong, or better and worse, of it she goes to buy some fruit to save her sister. So she grabs some loose change, puts it in her purse, says goodbye to her sister, and heads out to the brook. The heath is an area with low, dense shrubby growth, and the **clumps of furze** are clusters of a particular kind of shrub. It's **twilight**, which, as we know, is goblin time. For the first time, Lizzie doesn't shut her eyes and plug up her ears she actually looks at the goblins.

**Lines 329-334**

The goblins are delighted to see a new customer. They see Lizzie looking at them near the brook, and come running with all happy ways to the goblins.

**Lines 335-347**

This stanza just continues the overwhelming detail describing the individual goblins. It is a huge group, but each of them is different, and Rossetti seems determined to describe every single one. The goblins are **full of airs and graces**, in other words, they are very polite and graceful. But some of them are making wry, or sarcastic faces at Lizzie even at each other. Others are making demure, or modest faces. Again, there is a list of all the different animals the goblins resemble: cats, rats, ratels (a South African mammal that looks like a badger), wombats (a marsupial from Australia), snails, parrots, magpies, pigeons, fishes…

**Lines 348-352**

The goblins actually start to touch Lizzie physically, they **kiss and hug and caress and squeeze.** They hold out dishes and baskets of fruit to her.

**Lines 353-362**

The goblins tell Lizzie to admire their fruit. The same they did with Laura, the goblins list all their various kinds of fruit, inviting Lizzie to taste this or that. They have red or yellow apples, cherries, peaches, citrons, dates, grapes, pears, plums, pomegranates, and figs. That is a lot of choices. The goblins invite Lizzie to **pluck them and suck them**. Somewhere pluck and suck suggest the wrong intention of the goblins.

**Lines 363-367**

Lizzie keeps reminding herself about Jeanie, so she tells the goblins that she wants to buy some fruit, and tosses them her **silver penny**. It is interesting that Lizzie uses a coin to buy the fruit, while Laura traded a lock of her **golden hair**. Lizzie holds out her apron for them to fill with fruit to go.

**Lines 368-382**

The goblins tell Lizzie to have a seat and eat her fruit with them. After all, they tell her, it is still early, and the stars are out. And besides, they say, the fruits don't travel well **half their flavour** would be lost and they would get all dry and gross if she tried to take the fruit home.

**Lines 383-389**

Lizzie isn't convinced: she tells them she wants the fruit to go, or not at all – if they are not interested in sending her away with any, she wants her penny back. After all, Laura is waiting at home for her, by herself. She doesn't want to waste time sitting out by the brook with the goblins. She says she is not interested in parleying, or negotiating, any more about it.

**Lines 390-397**

The goblins start getting annoyed they are not ready to take back the fruit or give back the penny. They scratch their heads (pates), trying to decide how to deal with this troublesome girl. They are not smiling or purring anymore, but are demurring, or delaying. The goblins start insulting Lizzie, saying she is too **proud and cross-grained**, or stubborn, to sit and eat with them. They start getting louder and were obviously not good and their looks were evil.

**Lines 398-407**

The goblins start lashing their tails like whips, and hustle, or shove Lizzie around, and elbow her in the ribs. They were getting pretty violent. The goblins harass and physically assault Lizzie. They even tear her dress, dirty her **stocking**, or tights, and yank her hair. Then things get violent: some of them grab her hands while others try to force the fruit into her mouth.

**Lines 408-421**

Lizzie was not ready to give up. She stands firm against the goblins' violent assault. This stanza is a long list of similes describing Lizzie as she stands alone against the goblins. She is compared first to a **lily,** standing alone against a **flood** of water. Then she is compared to a stone that sticks up by itself in the tides of the ocean. (Notice that the stone is **blue-veined**, like a person's skin.)Next, she is compared to a beacon, or signal light, which shoots up golden fire as a sign to sailors in the hoary, or ancient, ocean. Like the blue-veined stone, the simile that compares Lizzie to a beacon reminds us of her physical body the **golden fire** is her golden blonde hair. Then Lizzie is compared to an **orange-tree** that is surrounded by buzzing, stinging insects. Again, we are reminded of Lizzie's body. First of all, because the **orange-tree** is fruit-crowned, and second, because the insects are trying to pollinate the tree. Do you know what pollination is, biologically speaking? Yep, and so did Rossetti. As if the pollination simile weren't enough, the final simile describes Lizzie as a city under siege –not just any city, of course, but a virgin town. The attacking fleet of enemy ships wants to yank down her standard, or flag.

**Lines 422-432**

Next, the poet quotes the old saying that you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink. The same is true of Lizzie: the goblins have her surrounded and keep trying to force-feed her fruit, but she keeps her mouth shut and refuses it. Even though the goblins cuffed and hit her, she still stands firm. Here is another of Rossetti's long lists describing the goblins and what they were doing to Lizzie. Lizzie doesn't make a peep, because she is afraid that if she opens her lips at all, even to say **Ouch** the goblins will be able to cram some fruit into her mouth.

**Lines 433-436**

Lizzie realises that she has defeated the goblins, therefore she laughs. But she laughs with close mouth within her heart, because if she opens her mouth to laugh at them, they'll get fruit in her mouth. The goblins could not get any fruit into Lizzie's mouth, but they poured the juices all over her body. The fruit juice is pooling in her **dimples** and is getting smeared all over her face and neck. At this point, Lizzie is a sticky mess, like a five-year-old after a pie-eating contest.

**Lines 437-446**

Finally, the goblins give up as they find Lizzie’s resistance too much for them. At least they have the politeness to return her penny before they go. The goblins scatter. Some of them **dive into the brook**, and others wriggle into the ground like worms. Some of them disappear on the **gale,** or wind. As they leave, they kick their fruit away.

**Lines 447-454**

Lizzie is aching all over after being attacked by the goblins. She is so out of it from being beaten up that she doesn't know whether it's night or day. This is kind of like Laura's initial reaction to eating the goblin fruit, way back at line 139. Lizzie runs up the bank of the brook and back across the heath, through copse, or wooded area, and dingle, or open meadow. She didn't have to give up her penny, so it's still jingling in her purse. That sound is music to her ear, but the poem doesn't tell us why it's so important to Lizzie that she got her penny back. Maybe the penny symbolized something else?

**Lines 455-463**

Lizzie keeps on running towards her home it’s as though she was afraid of the goblins. They might chase after her, either with a gibe, or verbal insult, or with something worse (more physical assault, maybe). But nothing chases her, she is by herself. And we are told that she isn't really motivated by fear of the goblins anymore. She runs because of her kind heart. She was worried about her sister, and is so pleased with herself that even though she was out of breath, but still laughs on from inside.

**Lines 464-474**

As soon as Lizzie enters the gate of their garden, she calls out to Laura. Lizzie invites her sister to come and lick up all the goblin fruit juice off of her. Of course, the way that she puts it (hug me, kiss me, suck my juices) is almost ludicrously erotic. So go ahead and laugh. Lizzie tells Laura that her little adventure with the goblin men was all for Laura's sake.

**Lines 475-484**

Laura sees her sister and jumps up. She is afraid that Lizzie has gone and eaten the goblin fruits, too, so she throws her hands in the air in despair. Laura is terrified that Lizzie has eaten the fruit forbidden, and that she'll waste away, too. She doesn't want to drag Lizzie down with her.

**Lines 485-492**

Laura hugs Lizzie, and kisses her again and again. Of course, since Lizzie is drenched in goblin fruit juice, Laura gets some in her mouth. Laura hasn't been able to cry for days, but upon seeing the sacrifice her sister, she starts to cry again. Crying refreshes her. Laura is actually shaking with a combination of aguish, or feverish, fear and pain. She just can't stop kissing her heroic sister. Of course, she kisses her with a hungry mouth, so there seems to be an element of greed here, as well as gratitude and affection.

**Lines 493-499**

The goblin fruit juice doesn't taste good to Laura – it actually burns her lips. It tastes like wormwood, or bitter poison to her. Laura writhess or squirms, in pain. It's as though she is possessed with an evil spirit. She jumps around, crying out, tearing at her dress, and generally freaking out.

**Lines 500-506**

We then get another stream of similes describing Laura. First, we were told that her hair is streaming behind her like the flame held by a racer (imagine someone running while carrying the Olympic torch). Then we are told that her hair is like the mane of a horse that's running. Or maybe it's like an eagle flying toward the sun. Or, maybe her hair flying free like something that has been caged for a long time and is enjoying its freedom. Finally, her hair is compared to a flag held up by a soldier in an advancing army.

**Lines 507-512**

Now Laura is healing. A fire spreads through her body from goblin fruit juice on Lizzie's skin, and overpowers the lesser flame that was burning in her heart. She gorged, or feasted, on unspeakable bitterness. The poet pulls back here and addresses Laura directly, as fool, and shakes her finger at her for making bad decisions. And eating goblin fruit, clearly, is a bad decision – it's soul-consuming care.

**Lines 513-523**

Laura loses consciousness as her body battles for life the mortal strife is the struggle for life. Here is another string of similes! Laura faints just like a watch-tower of a town that collapses in an earthquake. Or, she is like the mast of a ship that gets struck by lightning. She is also like a tree that gets uprooted and spun about by a strong wind or tornado. Notice how short line 518 is? It's as though even the line of the poem is getting spun about, or confused, by Laura losing consciousness. Laura is also compared to a waterspout that falls into the sea. So, she collapses. She is unconscious, and beyond both pleasure and anguish. The stanza ends with a question: is she alive or dead?

**Lines 524-529**

The first line of this stanza answers the question at the end of the previous one: it's not life *or* death, it's life *out of* death. Does that mean that Laura dies, and then comes back to life? It's unclear. Lizzie stays up all night to take care of Laura. She takes her pulse and gives her water to drink. Lizzie cries over her and fans her with leaves.

**Lines 530-542**

But by the time early morning rolls around, Laura is okay again. Just as the new day starts, Laura wakes up as though she was waking up from a dream. She is as fresh and new as the **lilies** that are opening down by the stream. Laura is able to laugh in the **innocent old way**, as she used to before she ate the goblin fruits. She hugs Lizzie a lot to thank her, of course. Even her hair is blonde again, instead of gray, and her eyes are bright again.

**Lines 543-547**

Flash forward years later for this stanza. Both Laura and Lizzie are **wives** and have their own children. Like all mothers, they worry about their kids.

**Lines 548-559**

Laura tells their kids all about her own youth and how she visited the **haunted glen** where the goblins were. She tells them the whole story. She says that the goblin fruit was so tasty, but was **poison in the blood**. Line 556 is an repeatation from Line 101. It repeats that **men** don't sell fruit like theirs in any town. Laura tells the kids about Lizzie's heroism – how she risked her own life to save Laura.

**Lines 560-567**

As Laura repeats the story to her children, she tells them that the moral is that sisters should stick together, because there is no friend like a sister. In calm or stormy weather sisters save each other and strengthen each other. The poem ends with Laura's moral to her children.