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ENGL 2174

Assignment 8

### Victorian Gender Roles in "Goblin Market"

In "Goblin Market," the poem describes a woman's roles in lines 199-209:

Early in the morning  
When the first cock crowed his warning,  
Neat like bees, as sweet and busy,  
Laura rose with Lizzie:  
Fetched in honey, milked the cows,  
Aired and set to rights the house,  
Kneaded cakes of whitest wheat,  
Cakes for dainty mouths to eat,  
Next churned butter, whipped up cream,  
Fed their poultry, sat and sewed;  
Talked as modest maidens should: (199-209)

These lines describe the everyday household chores of a woman in that time. The last line really confirms that the poet believes these chores to be the true role of a woman because after describing the things they do around the house it ends with "as modest maidens should" (209). Another kind of side note of gender roles is the responsible and caring characteristics of Lizzie. Lizzie from the get-go begs her sister not to give in to the goblin men, and warns her of what happened to their friend. When Laura gets sick and starts to wither away, Lizzie takes it upon herself to care for her sister and get the "antidote" to save

her life. Laura, on the other hand, is more of a contradiction to those gender values. When she gets sick and depressed, she gives up on life and lays in bed, leaving her sister to do all of the house work and take care of her.