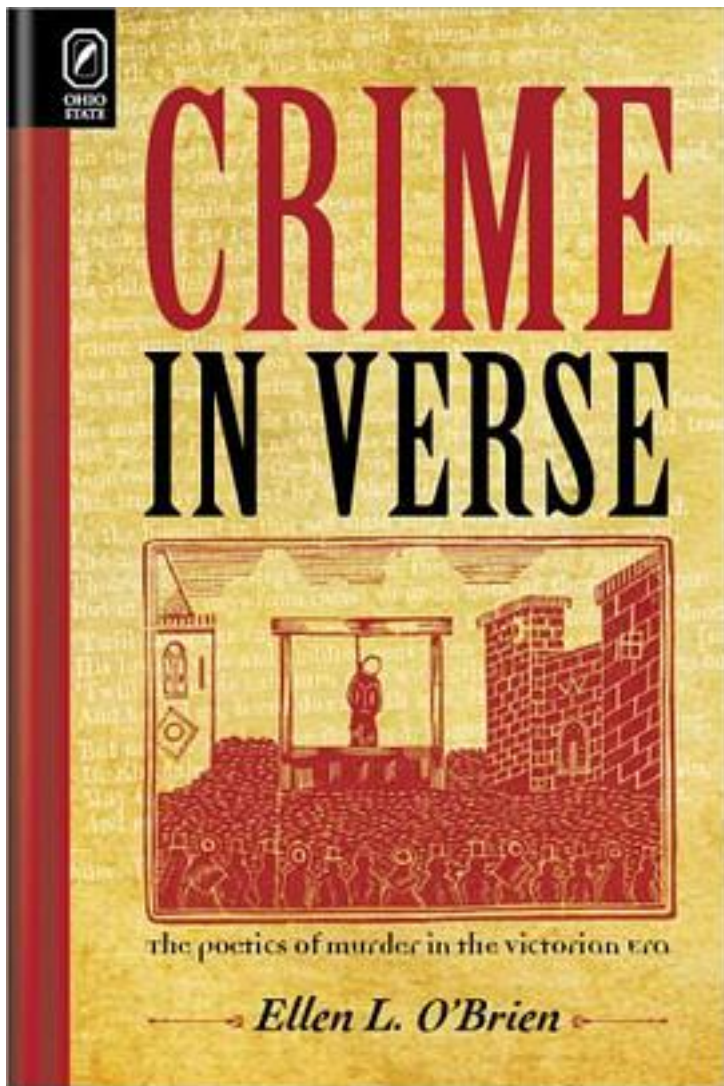


Crime in Verse



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Over the last few decades, Victorian scholars have produced many nuanced studies connecting the politics of crime to the generic developments of the novel--and vice versa. Ellen L. O'Brien's *Crime in Verse* grants the same attention and status to poetic representations of crime. Considering the literary achievements and cultural engagements of poetry while historicizing murder's entanglement in legal fictions, punitive practices, medical theories, class conflicts, and gender codes, O'Brien argues that shifting approaches to poetry and conflicted understandings of murder allowed poets to align problems of legal and literary interpretation in provocative, disruptive, and innovative ways. Developing focused analyses of generic and discursive meanings, individual chapters examine the classed politics of crime and punishment in the broadside ballad, the epistemological tensions of homicidal lunacy and criminal responsibility in the dramatic monologue, and the legal and ideological frictions of domestic violence in the verse novel and verse drama. Their juxtaposition of the rhymes of anonymous street balladeers, the underexamined verse of "minor" poets, and the familiar poems of canonical figures suggests the interactive and intertextual relationships informing poetic agendas and political arguments. As it simultaneously reconsiders the institutional and ideological status of murder and the aesthetic and political interests of poetry, *Crime in Verse* offers new ways of thinking about Victorian poetry's contents and contexts.

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