How Shakespeare's women are perceived depends on contemporary attitudes. Audiences several centuries ago might have had fewer problems with Kate being forced into submission. "The popularity of Shakespeare's heroines waxes and wanes according to how they seem to represent certain moments and notions of femininity," says Gail Kern Paster, director emerita at the Folger Shakespeare Library. In some plays, Shakespeare goes "goes into this dark place where the women want the same things as the men". "Think of Lady Macbeth, Volumnia in Coriolanus, and the eldest daughters in King Lear. What happens when the women are as ambitious as the men? It's terrible." "Rouz'd by a Woman's Pen': The Shakespeare Ladies' Club and Reading Habits of Early Modern Women". Current work on early modern women and poetry – including the present volume – is illuminating the relations between poetry and its social contexts. We are discovering that women's poems were frequently produced in the family, the friendship group, the neighbourhood, or communities defined by shared political or religious affiliation, and that creative interactions within such communities took diverse and complex forms. We are also learning that early modern poetry did more than just reflect pre-existing relationships; rather, poems performed social functions, and actively forged, defined and...