Magnifying a Truth

Historical & Artistic Contexts
“Natural things / and spiritual, - who separates those two / In art, 
in morals, or the social drift, / Tears up the bond of nature and 
brings death, / Paints futile pictures, writes unreal verse, / Leads 
vulgar days, deals ignorantly with men, / Is wrong, in short, at all 
points. We divide / This apple of life, and cut it through the pips, - / 
The perfect round which fitted Venus’ hand / Has perished as 
utterly as if we ate / Both halves. Without the spiritual, observe, / 
The natural’s impossible, - no form, / No motion: without 
sensuous, spiritual / Is inappreciable, - no beauty or power: / And in 
this twofold sphere the twofold man / (For still the artist is 
intensely a man) / Holds firmly by the natural, to reach / The 
spiritual beyond it, - fixes still / The type with mortal vision, to 
pierce through, / With eyes immortal, to the antetype / Some call 
the ideal, - better called the real, / And certain to be called so 
presently / When things hall have their names” (7.763-785).

Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s *Aurora Leigh* (1856)
Giotto di Bondone’s
_Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints_ (c.1305-10)

see “Fra Lippo Lippi” for “Here’s Giotto [...]” (l.189)
Giotto di Bondone’s
The
Mourning of Christ
(1306)

see “Fra Lippo Lippi” for “Here’s Giotto” (l.189)
Fra Angelico’s Annunciation (1450)
see “Fra Lippo Lippi” for “Brother Angelico” (I.235)
Fra Angelico’s *Madonna with Angel and the Saints Dominic and Catherine* (c.1437)

see “Fra Lippo Lippi” for “Brother Angelico” (l.235)
Masaccio’s *Expulsion from the Garden of Eden* (c. 1424-28)

see “Fra Lippo Lippi” for “We’ve a youngster here [...] His name is Guidi” (II.273-76)
Masaccio’s *The Tribute Money* (c. 1425-27)
see “Fra Lippo Lippi” for “We’ve a youngster here” (l.273)
Fra Lippo Lippi’s Madonna with Child and Angels (1465)
Fra Lippo Lippi’s *Herod’s Banquet* (1452-65)
see “Fra Lippo Lippi” for “I’d like his face [...] for the slave that holds John Baptist’s head a-dangle by the hair” (ll.31-34)
discuss RB’s “Fra Lippo Lippi,” then . . .
What would Aurora Leigh and Fra Lippo Lippi make of these next, more modern works?
Arthur Hacker’s *Innocence* (1899)
Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s *Sibylla Palmifera* (1865-70)
Edwin Long’s *Merab* (1883)
Pablo Picasso’s *Les Demoiselles d’Avignon* (1907)
Salvador Dalí’s *The Persistence of Memory* (1931)
Claude Monet’s *House of Parliament in Fog* (1904)