

New York Browning Society, Inc.
Founded in 1907
National Arts Club
15 Gramercy Park South
New York, NY 10003



Newsletter

Our March meeting is on Wednesday the 8th at 1 pm.

“Robert Browning and the Meaning of Music”

by

Robert Kramer,

A widely published playwright, poet, and translator of European literature¹

1. The New York Browning Society would like to thank Mary-Grace Gannon, Margaret Gonzalez and the Xavier High School students who read poems at our February meeting. Our president James Browning Kepple said it was an excellent event.

2. Our next speaker, Robert Kramer has been nominated twice for a Pushcart Prize. He was a winner of the 2016 *Absoloose* National Poetry Contest.

¹ Members are encouraged to read three poems relating to the talk: "Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha," "A Toccata of Galuppi's" and "Abt Vogler."

The first volume of *Absoloose: A Choice Collection of Fresh Poetry* and Kramer's *Wordglass* are available on the Internet. A recipient of awards from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Fulbright Scholar Program, Robert Kramer has read his poetry and translations on the radio and the television, and at New York University, The University of California and Harvard University. He has lectured at the Smithsonian, the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Art Therapist Association. We are pleased to welcome him again to speak at the Club.

3. Elizabeth Barrett Browning may have named *Aurora Leigh* for Lord Byron's sister. Her name was Augusta Leigh. The first line of Byron's "Stanzas to Augusta" is "When all around grew drear and dark." If Byron inspired Elizabeth Barrett Browning, then it seems the latter contrasted the early morning light and perhaps a few last stars, or the aurora, with Byron's somber, twilight imagery. For fear of giving this gem of an observation to our society members and revealing this secret

which may be attributable to a very obscure Browning scholar, I will refrain from an in depth explanation of it.

4. Instead we will discuss Browning trivia. According to Margaret Reynolds, Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning read and studied ancient Greek without accents. If they were working with bilingual poetry editions, or reading Greek plays with translations on the side, it is unlikely that much confusion would occur because of the accents. We know the poets read in many languages: Greek, surely Italian and probably renaissance Italian because Robert Browning admired Ariosto.

5. From their international correspondence, we know Elizabeth Barrett Browning was interested in 19th century politics. She wrote to French philosophers and journalists who made socialism accessible and available to the public. I think that few people would doubt that her poetry had an effect socially and politically, that it “did something.” Susan B. Anthony, the American activist who advocated for equal voting rights, was a consumer of the poetry of Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

6. “Parting at Morning”

*Round the cape of a sudden came the sea,
And the sun looked over the mountain's rim:
And straight was the path of gold for him,
And the need of a world of men for me.*

by Robert Browning

7. The quality of the imagery is some of the best of Browning's because it clearly describes a rural area. The “path of gold” is a metaphor for the yellow sunlight perceived from the dank atmosphere of a ship. “Parting at Morning” is an experience of light after the natural aurora in the clouds then the sunrise on the green leaves of the tree branches.

8. “If Shakespeare could sing with myriad lips, Browning could stammer through a thousand mouths.” Oscar Wilde

9. Longtime member Bob Griffiths will speak for us next month. The title of his talk is “James Lee's Wife: Echoes of Love and Loss.”

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