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Browning, Grief, and the Strangeness of Dramatic Verse

[Francis O'Gorman](#)

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Abstract

As a poet, Browning was preoccupied by the dead. Yet mourning the departed was rarely part of his purposes. His poetics privileged the notion

of resurrection, yet he was intriguingly deaf to the implications of the trope. Most notably, Browning was uninterested in the grief that might be thought implicit in poetry which claimed to recall the dead yet dealt – of course – always with illusions. This essay considers the implications of that absent grief, and argues that Browning, through that absence, encouraged his readers, among other things, to *feel* the strangeness of imaginative experience created by dramatic verse.

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