

# The New York Browning Society, Inc. Newsletter

*Founded in 1907*

**Date** Wednesday, April 16th 2025

**Time** 6:00– 7:30PM

**Place** Jefferson Market Library

425 Avenue of the Americas

**Winners and Shortlist**

## 1<sup>st</sup> Annual NYC Browning Poetry Contest



We bring together the works of our first NYC wide New York Browning Society Poetry contest for all ages! This is an open entry for poets in the 5 boroughs. Join the New York Browning Society for the readings of their award winning pieces. The entry deadline is April 9<sup>th</sup>. We will announce the winners on April 12<sup>th</sup>! We can't wait to see what New York City poets have to offer! [www.nybrowning.org](http://www.nybrowning.org)  
**JEFFERSON MARKET LIBRARY – 425 AVE. OF THE AMERICAS – 4/16/25 6pm!**

### *Life and Love*

By Elizabeth Barrett Browning

I.

Fast this Life of mine was dying,  
 Blind already and calm as death,  
 Snowflakes on her bosom lying  
 Scarcely heaving with her breath.

II.

Love came by, and having known her  
 In a dream of fabled lands,  
 Gently stooped, and laid upon her  
 Mystic chrism of holy hands;



III.

Drew his smile across her folded  
 Eyelids, as the swallow dips;  
 Breathed as finely as the cold did  
 Through the locking of her lips.

IV.

So, when Life looked upward, being  
 Warmed and breathed on from above,  
 What sight could she have for seeing,  
 Evermore ... but only Love?



### Profile

We introduce Philip Kelley, former President, whose role in the revival of interest in and scholarship about the Brownings extends far beyond the society itself. For example, he and the late Ronald Hudson started the annotated compilation of the Browning's complete correspondence. Volume 1 was published in 1984, and Volume 31 was recently published in 2024 at Wedgstone Press.

Here are Dr. Kelley's Remembrances: "I first attended a meeting of the New York Browning Society in November 1956. I was returning to Kansas from Europe and was invited as the guest of Mrs. Thomas D. Rambaut, later president, 1957-1961. If I recall correctly, she involved [Past President] Donald Pepper in the society about the same time. The venue was 1 Fifth Avenue (now a NYU dorm). The program featured dramatic readings from *The Ring* and *the Book*, performed by members Mr. and Mrs. Theodore F. Fitch. He was wearing an Indian dagger, with ivory grip damascened and jeweled, in a velvet and silver-mounted scabbard. At a crucial moment, he pointed the dagger at his wife, drawing gasps from the audience. I learned later that the dagger had belonged to Browning. The Fitches gave it to the Society which in turn gave it to the Browning Institute. It is now at Eton College.

"After I moved to New York, I began attending society meetings in the autumn of 1968. During sessions held the following spring, Rena Kleefeld and I expressed our concerns about the future of Casa Guidi to supportive listeners.

Subsequently Emily Hope and Mrs. Harry E. Jones (1961-1965) approached me and asked if I would allow them to nominate me for president, succeeding Katharine M. Clayberger (1965-1969). Although a male serving as president violated the society's bylaws, Mrs. Hope and Mrs. Jones both felt that if I were president, it would give the society the best chance to save Casa Guidi. My four-year tenure in that position ran from 1969 to 1973. With the backing of the Society, sufficient funds were raised and the property secured. In 1971 the Society formed the Browning Institute which took title of Casa Guidi and accepted the responsibility for its preservation. In 1991, ownership was transferred to Eton College. Casa Guidi was officially opened to visitors in July 1995, twenty-six years after the subject of its preservation was first broached at a meeting of the New York Browning Society."

*The World of Browning studies and our Society are forever indebted to Philip's dedication, hard work, and scholarship.*



### THE 2025 DOWNEY NYC HIGH SCHOOL POETRY CONTEST IS OPEN TO SUBMISSIONS

Our 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Contest invites 125+ Public, Private & Parochial High Schools in NYC! – We look forward to our May 14<sup>th</sup> meeting to celebrate all of what these talented young poets have to offer! Mark your calendars for this special presentation to end our 118<sup>th</sup> season! We look to see you there!

#### Board of Directors

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JOIN US THIS  
WEDNESDAY  
April 16<sup>th</sup>  
Mae West Room  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor 6pm!

[www.nybrowning.org](http://www.nybrowning.org)

*The New York Browning Society, Inc. Dues and Donation Form*

Make checks payable to: New York Browning Society  
Mail checks to James Kepple, President  
227 West 149th Street, #6F; New York, NY 10039

Enclosed is my check for:	<u>Regular (\$25)</u>	<u>Patron (\$50)</u>
2023-2024 dues	_____	_____
Additional Donation	_____	_____
Total	\$ _____	\$ _____

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Comments and suggestions?