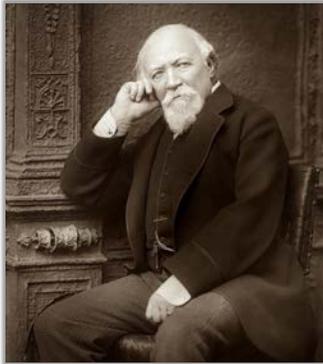
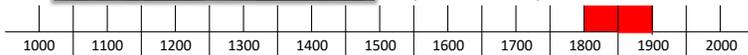


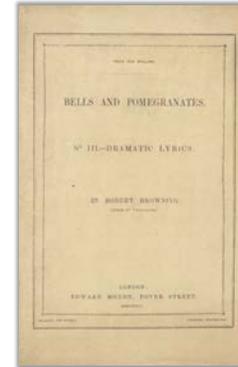
👤 Robert Browning (1812-1889)



- born to a wealthy suburban family; received a well-rounded home education
- published *Dramatic Lyrics* (1842), which included “My Last Duchess”; became renowned as a dramatic-monologue innovator
- eloped to Italy in 1846 with the poet Elizabeth Barrett (who wrote “How Do I Love Thee”)
- wrote many of his best works following Barrett’s death in 1861 (NAEL E407-09)



📖 Browning, “My Last Duchess” (1842)



- first appeared in *Dramatic Lyrics*, the third of eight pamphlets containing Browning’s early work
- collectively entitled *Bells and Pomegranates* (1841-46), the pamphlets were intended to sell for prices less expensive than full-sized books
- originally intended to include plays only, but Browning’s publisher, the influential Edward Moxon, convinced him also to include poetry (*Wikipedia*)

Browning, “How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix” (1845) 🔊

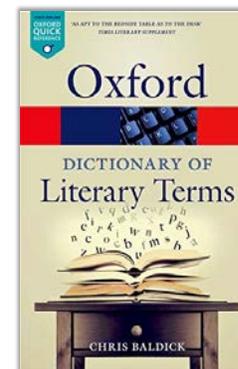
I sprang to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;
“Good Speed!” cried the watch, as the gate-bolts undrew;
“Speed!” echoed the wall to us galloping through;
Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,
And into the midnight we galloped abreast. (1-6)

I’m terribly sorry but I can’t remember my own verses, but one thing that I shall remember all my life is the astonishing [inaudible] by your wonderful invention.

[other voices] Robert Browning! Bravo, bravo, bravo! Hip, hip, hooray! Hip, hip, hooray! Hip, hip, hooray! Bravo!

- Browning’s “How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix” (NAEL E414-16) is one of the earliest surviving recordings of a British poet’s actual voice
- recorded on an Edison machine in April 1889 at a dinner party given by Browning’s friend, the artist Rudolf Lehmann, eight months before Browning’s death
- unable to remember more than the first few lines of the poem, he apologizes to the audience, who then cheer him on

monologue



- from the Greek *monos* (“alone”) and *legein* (“to speak”)
- an extended speech uttered by a single speaker, either to others or as if alone (Baldick 232)
- types:
 - dramatic monologue (106)
 - soliloquy (336)
 - monodrama (231)
 - interior monologue (183)
 - solo address

dramatic monologue

characteristics

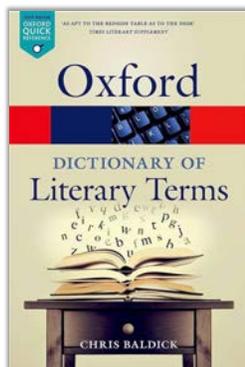
- a speaker with a distinctive manner of speech that reveals their personality
- the presence of a silent interlocutor whose reactions are inferred from the speaker
- a speaker who registers ongoing, changing responses to the circumstances and/or to the silent interlocutor's inferred reactions
- a poem in which one character speaks to a silent "audience" of one or more persons
- speaker can be fictional or drawn from history
- reveals not the poet's own thoughts but those of the character, whose personality is revealed unwittingly
- famous examples include Browning's "Fra Lippo Lippi" (1855), and Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (Baldick 106)

Lucrezia de' Medici (1545-1561)



- born in Florence, the first wife of Alfonso II d'Este, Duke of Modena and Ferrara, whom she married on 3 July 1558
- did not move to Ferrara until February 1560, as her husband was fighting in France
- died in 1561, likely poisoned by her husband
- suffered month-long symptoms including fever, severe weight loss, constant coughing, and a permanently bleeding nose (Wikipedia)

voice



- what the *speaker*, or the *poetic persona*, sounds like in a poem
- the *viewpoint* or *tone* of a poem's speaker or poetic persona
 - **viewpoint:** who is the "I," "you," or "we" in the poem?
 - **tone:** what is the speaker's attitude, mood, moral outlook, personality, etc.?
- a poem is not necessarily a direct expression of the poet's own thoughts and feelings (Baldick 380)

enjambment

... so not the first
 Are you to turn and ask thus? Sir, 'twas not
 Her husband's presence only called that spot
 Of joy into the Duchess' cheek; perhaps
 Fra Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps
 Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
 Must never hope to reproduce the faint
 Half-flush that dies along her throat;" Such stuff
 Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
 For calling up that spot of joy. She had
 A heart how shall I say? too soon made
 glad.... (12-22)
 Robert Browning. "My Last Duchess." 1842.

- a.k.a. *enjambement*, *run-on line*
- the running over of the sense and grammatical structure from one verse line or couplet to the next without a punctuated pause
- the completion of a phrase, clause, or sentence is held over to the following line so that the line ending is not emphasized
- opposite of *end-stopped lines*, in which the pause at the end of a verse line coincides with the completion of a phrase, clause, or sentence (Baldick 380)

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