

American Mourning

How does the way in which a democratic polity mourns its losses shape its political outcomes? How *might* it shape those outcomes? *American Mourning: Tragedy, Democracy, Resilience* answers these questions with a critical study of American public mourning. Employing mourning as a lens through which to view the shortcomings of American democracy and as a tool for addressing the same, it offers an argument for a tragic, complex, and critical mode of mourning that it contrasts with the nationalist, romantic, and nostalgic responses to loss that currently dominate and damage the polity. Offering new readings of key texts in Ancient and contemporary political thought, as well as in American politics and history, it engages debates central to recent democratic theory concerned with agonism, acknowledgment, hope, humanism, patriotism, and political resilience. The book outlines new ways of thinking about and responding to terrorism, racial conflict, and the problems of democratic military return.

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Tragedy, Democracy, Resilience

SIMON STOW

The College of William and Mary



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*For Caroline and Thea,
and in memory of my brother, Tim Stow (1974–2009).*

You may rejoice, I must mourn.
– Frederick Douglass

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