



How Do I Love Thee?

Supporting Ideas



Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote this poem shortly before her marriage to Robert Browning in 1846. The poem was published, along with some of her other poems, in 1850 as a collection called Sonnets from the Portuguese.

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.



It's clear from the poem that Elizabeth loves Robert. Find two passages from the text that most strongly support this idea Explain your reasoning.

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It's clear from the poem that Elizabeth loves Robert. Find two passages from the text that most strongly support this idea. Explain your reasoning.

Actual answers will vary. Correct answers may include these references:

“I love thee to the depth and breadth and height/ My soul can reach...”

This implies that there is no part of her soul that does not love him.

“...I love thee with the breath,/ Smiles, tears of all my life!” Browning

contrasts happiness (smiles) and sadness (tears) to represent every

moment of their lives together. This means that she will love him always,

whether the times are good or bad. By adding the reference to

breath, she underscores that she will love him the rest of her life.