

AZAD HIND FOUZ SMRITI MAHAVIDYALAYA
DOMJUR, HOWRAH

SEMESTER 2

AEC
(ABILITY ENHANCEMENT COURSE)

COMPULSORY ENGLISH

UNIT 1: POETRY

“HOW DO I LOVE THEE?”
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

PREPARED BY

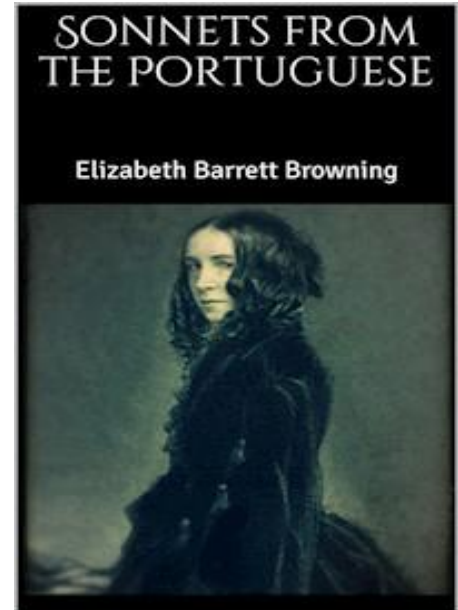
DR. ADITI SENGUPTA
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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How do I love thee?

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

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 every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
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.

*Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Robert Browning*

Short Questions:

1. Who wrote *How do I love thee?*

Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote '*How do I love thee?*'

2. From which book (collection of poems) is '*How do I love thee?*' taken?

'*How do I love thee?*' is taken from the book "*Sonnets from the Portuguese*" (1850).

3. How many poems are there in the collection "*Sonnets from the Portuguese*"?

There are 44 sonnets in the collection "*Sonnets from the Portuguese*".

4. What is the number of the sonnet '*How do I love thee?*' In the collection?

'*How do I love thee?*' is sonnet number 43 in "*Sonnets from the Portuguese*".

5. What kind of poem is '*How do I love thee?*'

'*How do I love thee?*' is an Italian or Petrarchan sonnet.

6. How many lines are there in a sonnet?

There are fourteen lines in a sonnet.

7. Whom does the poet love in '*How do I love thee?*'

The poet, Elizabeth Barrett Browning loves her husband Robert Browning in '*How do I love thee?*'

8. What is the meaning of 'thee'?

'Thee' means 'you'.

9. Who is 'thee' in '*How do I love thee?*'

'Thee' refers to the speaker's beloved / husband, Robert Browning, an English poet of the Victorian Age.

10. In what century was the Victorian age in England?

Victorian age in England was in the 19th century (1837 to 1901).

11. What does the speaker count in “*How do I love thee?*”?

The speaker counts the different ways she loves her husband in “*How do I love thee?*”

12. How does the speaker measure her love in ‘*How do I love thee?*’

The speaker measures her love by the “depth and breadth and height” of her soul.

13. What is meant by “ends of being and ideal grace” in “*How do I love thee?*”?

The “ends of being and ideal grace” means the speaker will continue to love till the end of her life (being) when she receives ideal grace in heaven.

14. What does the speaker mean by saying, “every day’s most quiet need”?

The speaker’s love is expressed in ordinary moments of everyday life.

15. What is indicated by ‘sun’ and ‘candle-light’ in ‘*How do I love thee?*’

‘Sun’ indicates day time and ‘candle-light’ indicates night when candles are lighted.

16. What does the speaker mean by saying, “I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;”?

She loves her husband without hesitation, as people do right deeds without thinking twice.

17. What does the speaker mean by saying, “I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.”?

She loves her husband virtuously (purely) and does not want any praise for loving him.

18. What are the ‘old griefs’ of the poet in ‘*How do I love thee?*’

‘Old griefs’ are the past sad experiences of her speaker’s childhood.

19. Who are the ‘lost saints’ of the poet in ‘*How do I love thee?*’

The speaker loved / respected certain people as a child; they were like ‘saints’ to her. Later, she lost respect for them, so they are called ‘lost saints’.

20. What kind of people can be described as ‘saints’?

Good and virtuous persons are described as ‘saints’.

21. What does the speaker mean by “my childhood’s faith” in “*How do I love thee?*”?

The speaker trusts (faith) her husband with the faith an innocent child.

22. How is the poet’s love for the lost saints different from her love for her husband?

The poet has stopped loving the ‘lost saints’ but she will never stop loving her husband.

23. What is indicated by ‘smiles’ and ‘tears’ in ‘*How do I love thee?*’

‘Smiles’ indicate happiness and ‘tears’ indicate sadness – she loves her beloved both in happy and sad times.

24. Who does the speaker pray to at the end of ‘*How do I love thee?*’

The speaker prays to God at the end of ‘*How do I love thee?*’

25. If God chooses, how will the poet love better?

If God chooses (allows), the poet will love her husband even better after her death.

26. What is the theme of ‘*How do I love thee?*’

The theme of ‘*How do I love thee?*’ is eternal love that exists even after death.