

Sonnet 43 elizabeth browning assignment

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Sonnet 43 by Elizabeth Barrett Browning 1806-1861 The poet begins by saying “ How do I love thee? Let me count the ways,” by which she starts off with a rhetorical question, because there is no ‘ reason’ for love. Rather than using “ why” she enforces this meaning. But then she goes on saying that she will count the ways, which is a contradiction against her first line. In the rest of the poem she is explaining how much she loves. In the second line she says “ I love thee to the depth & breath & height” using normal measurements for something that cannot be measured.

This is a spatial metaphor. In this way she is trying to illustrate she loves every single piece of him. That there is nothing that she would change about him. This is a sonnet and all sonnets have 14 lines where the two last usually have a broader meaning than the rest of the sonnet. In the final lines she has achieved this by bringing up the subject of the afterlife ??? “ and, if God choose, I shall but love thee better after death”. In the sonnet, Barrett Browning repeats “ I love thee” over and over again rather than using different words for love.

This anaphora is to enforce the already existing knowledge about the strength of her love, and that what she feels is love, nothing more and nothing less. Also, by repeating it she is enforcing it on the readers that she loves him and there is nothing else to do about it, nothing that will make her change her mind. Also in the poem, no gender is implied. She just keeps saying “ Thee” which has a certain formality over it. This is a very powerful key factor to the poem because she uses no gender markers such as him, her, she or he which makes it possible for the poem to be read out loud to any gender with any sexual preference.

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When she mentions her childhood's faith she is implying the innocence of their relationship and how they can be naive sometimes. But love needs naivety to survive. If you cannot believe there is no need for even trying. When the poet mentions " With my lost Saints" she is referring to those people in her life that she trusted and loved, which in the end, betrayed her. When she says " Saints" she is referring to the glorification she put on them, how much she trusted them increasing the power of their betrayal. By using this in a poem about love she makes the reader think that the person writing this is not naive, that she is able to ask questions and not let everything pass her by. She is saying that people have betrayed her before, and that she has learned from her mistakes and that she is one hundred percent sure that he will not betray her, that he is ' The one'. Earlier on, Barrett Browning says " I love thee purely" meaning that there is no distrust, no judgment in their love. When something is pure it means that it has no flaws.

But by saying this she also raises a question by which love really can be pure or if this is just a similarity. That it is as close to pure as possible. Also, in the line " I love thee freely, as men strive for right" she is saying that she loves him, without expecting anything back. Also that she is willing to fight for him. The thing about this sonnet is that it is written in present. This enforces that it's not a love that has not been nor will be, it is something which is going on right now creating a sense of infinite flow to the poem. Haytham Whitear