

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING (born 1806, Kelloe, Durham, England;
died 1861, Florence, Kingdom of Italy)

Sonnet 43 *[How Do I Love Thee?]*

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.

From *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, a sequence of 44 sonnets that Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote between 1845-1846 and first published in 1850 in a new edition of her *Poems*. The sequence's title, chosen to suggest that these sonnets are translations (i.e., not autobiographical), alludes to an earlier poem by E.B.B., "Catarina to Camoens," spoken in the guise of Catarina, a Portuguese woman portraying her love for Luís de Camões, the national poet of Portugal. E.B.B. presented this sonnet sequence to her husband, poet Robert Browning, in 1847, a year after they eloped to Italy.

TERRANCE HAYES (born 1971, Columbia, South Carolina, USA)

American Sonnet for My Past and Future Assassin *[Seven of the ten things]*

Seven of the ten things I love in the face
Of James Baldwin concern the spiritual
Elasticity of his expressions. The sashay
Between left & right eyebrow, for example.
The crease between his eyes like a tuning
Fork or furrow, like a riverbed branching
Into tributaries like lines of rapturous sentences
Searching for a period. The dimple in his chin
Narrows & expands like a pupil. Most of all,
I love all of his eyes. And those wrinkles
The feel & color of wet driftwood in the mud
Around those eyes. Mud is made of
Simple rain & earth, the same baptismal
Spills & hills of dirt James Baldwin is made of.

From *American Sonnets for My Past and Future Assassin* (Penguin Books, 2018) by
Terrance Hayes. All poems in this book are sonnets, some of which first appeared in
magazines; each sonnet in the sequence has the same title, which is also the book's title.