

Evaluate the poem "How Do I Love Thee?" as a sonnet.

Generated: Jan 26, 2026

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Elizabeth Barrett Browning's (1806-61) "How Do I Love Thee?" (1850) is a classic sonnet from her collection **"Sonnets from the Portuguese."** This poem is about deep and eternal love. It uses the traditional sonnet form to express strong feelings. The speaker talks about her endless love, which grows even after death.

Traditional Sonnet Form: The poem follows the structure of an Italian or Petrarchan sonnet. It has 14 lines. These are divided into an octave (first 8 lines) and a sestet (last 6 lines). The rhyme scheme is ABBA ABBA CDCDCD, which is typical of this form. The octave introduces the vastness of love, while the sestet expands its eternal nature.

Iambic Pentameter: The poem uses iambic pentameter. This means each line has 10 syllables, with alternating unstressed and stressed beats. This rhythm gives the poem a smooth and musical flow.

Deep Emotional Tone: The poem balances personal feelings and universal ideas. It uses strong emotions like passion, faith, and grief. This emotional depth is typical of romantic sonnets.

Timeless Theme: The poem talks about love that is eternal and beyond death. This connects to the spiritual nature of many classic sonnets. The sonnet beautifully explores the many ways the speaker loves her partner. It moves from simple daily love to spiritual and eternal love. This is in line with sonnet traditions, where love and devotion are key themes.

"How Do I Love Thee?" is a perfect example of a sonnet. It follows the structure, rhyme, and rhythm of traditional sonnets. The theme of everlasting love makes it even more special.