



Poetry Recitation & Copywork

Poetry Selections

This session's featured poet is Elizabeth Barrett Browning. We've included six poetry selections for your kids and teens to read, listen to, memorize, and recite. They are:

- How Do I Love Thee? (Sonnet No. 43)
- If Thou Must Love Me (Sonnet No. 14)
- The Lady's Yes
- Beloved, Thou Has Brought Me Many Flowers (Sonnet No. 44)
- Patience Taught by Nature
- Cheerfulness Taught by Reason

For copywork, we have included Zaner-Bloser style handwriting sheets for primary, elementary, and cursive, as well as college ruled for older students. The poems we have chosen are:

- Beloved, Thou Has Brought Me Many Flowers (Sonnet No. 44)
- The Lady's Yes
- Cheerfulness Taught By Reason
- Patience Taught By Nature

"God Himself is the best Poet, And the Real is His song."

~ Elizabeth Barrett Browning



Elizabeth Barrett Browning

March 6, 1806 - June 29, 1861

Elizabeth Barrett Browning was born on March 6th, 1806, in Durham, England, to a prosperous family. She was the oldest of 12 children and lived a comfortable and happy life during her childhood. She grew up playing outdoors, reading books, and writing poems with her brothers and sisters.

Her parents encouraged her to learn about all kinds of subjects, including literature, philosophy, politics, history, science, and theology. From an early age, Elizabeth displayed a great talent for writing and composed her first poem at only six years old.

At 15 years old, Elizabeth contracted a serious illness that confined her to bed rest for several months. This period of time left lasting effects on her physical and mental state, and she would continue to battle severe spinal and head pain throughout the course of her life. Despite these hardships, she continued to write.

In 1842, Elizabeth published a poem called "The Cry of the Children," which called to attention the evils and hardships of child labor. This poem helped to raise support for a bill that brought reforms. Her early writing made her an established poet in England and later in Europe, with works like *Aurora Leigh* receiving much critical acclaim and being considered by some to be one of the greatest poems of the 19th century.

In 1845, Elizabeth eloped with Robert Browning, a poet she had corresponded with for years. He was a great admirer of her work, and they greatly influenced each other's writing in the years following. Despite her restrictions from chronic illness and depression, they traveled to Italy, where Elizabeth wrote one of her most well-known works, *Sonnets from the Portuguese*.

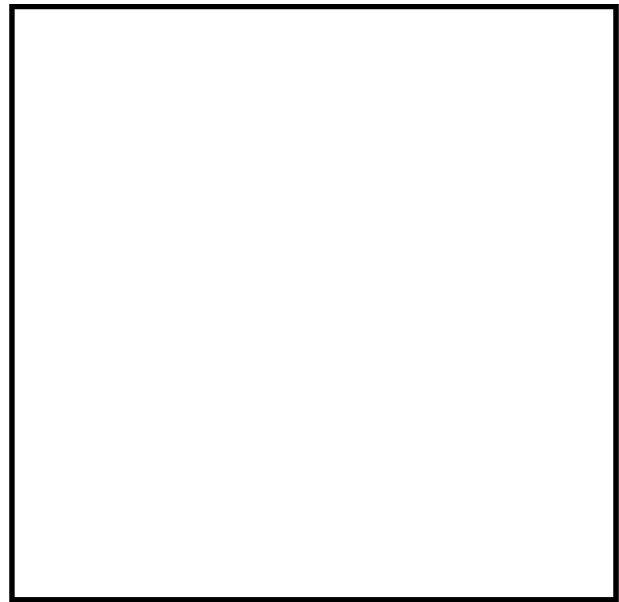
While she may have suffered from poor health throughout her life, she remained dedicated to writing until her death at the age of 55 in 1861. Elizabeth's words have comforted, moved, and inspired countless readers and writers over the years.

Poet Study

Poet: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Place of Birth: _____



3 Facts About the Poet:

Best Known Poems by the Poet:

Elizabeth Barrett Browning Selections

How Do I Love Thee? (Sonnet No. 43)

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.

If Thou Must Love Me (Sonnet No. 14)

If thou must love me, let it be for nought
Except for love's sake only. Do not say,
"I love her for her smile—her look—her way
Of speaking gently,—for a trick of thought
That falls in well with mine, and certes brought
A sense of pleasant ease on such a day"—
For these things in themselves, Belovèd, may
Be changed, or change for thee—and love, so wrought,
May be unwrought so. Neither love me for
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry:
A creature might forget to weep, who bore
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!
But love me for love's sake, that evermore
Thou mayst love on, through love's eternity.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning Selections

The Lady's Yes

" Yes !" I answered you last night ;
" No !" this morning, Sir, I say !
Colours, seen by candle-light,
Will not look the same by day.

When the tabors played their best,
Lamps above, and laughs below —
Love me sounded like a jest,
Fit for *Yes* or fit for *No* !

Call me false, or call me free —
Vow, whatever light may shine,
No man on your face shall see
Any grief for change on mine.

Yet the sin is on us both —
Time to dance is not to woo —
Wooer light makes fickle troth —
Scorn of *me* recoils on *you* !

Learn to win a lady's faith
Nobly, as the thing is high ;
Bravely, as for life and death —
With a loyal gravity.

Lead her from the festive boards,
Point her to the starry skies,
Guard her, by your truthful words,
Pure from courtship's flatteries.

By your truth she shall be true —
Ever true, as wives of yore —
And her *Yes*, once said to you,
SHALL be *Yes* for evermore.

Sonnets from the Portuguese 44: Beloved, thou has brought me many flowers

Beloved, thou hast brought me many flowers
Plucked in the garden, all the summer through
And winter, and it seemed as if they grew
In this close room, nor missed the sun and showers,
So, in the like name of that love of ours,
Take back these thoughts which here unfolded too,
And which on warm and cold days I withdrew
From my heart's ground. Indeed, those beds and bowers
Be overgrown with bitter weeds and rue,
And wait thy weeding; yet here's eglantine,
Here's ivy!— take them, as I used to do
Thy flowers, and keep them where they shall not pine.
Instruct thine eyes to keep their colours true,
And tell thy soul, their roots are left in mine.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning Selections

Patience Taught by Nature

"O Dreary life!" we cry, "O dreary life!"
And still the generations of the birds
Sing through our sighing, and the flocks and
herds
Serenely live while we are keeping strife
With Heaven's true purpose in us, as a knife
Against which we may struggle. Ocean girds
Unslackened the dry land: savannah-swards
Unweary sweep: hills watch, unworn; and rife
Meek leaves drop yearly from the forest-trees,
To show, above, the unwasted stars that pass
In their old glory. O thou God of old!
Grant me some smaller grace than comes to
these;—
But so much patience, as a blade of grass
Grows by contented through the heat and cold.

Cheerfulness Taught by Reason

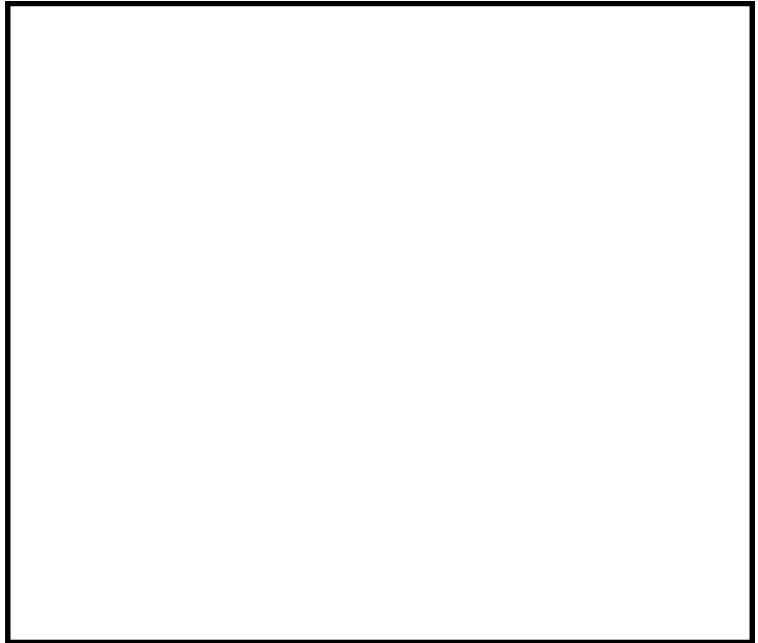
I think we are too ready with complaint
In this fair world of God's. Had we no hope
Indeed beyond the zenith and the slope
Of yon gray blank of sky, we might be faint
To muse upon eternity's constraint
Round our aspirant souls. But since the scope
Must widen early, is it well to droop,
For a few days consumed in loss and taint?
O pusillanimous Heart, be comforted,—
And, like a cheerful traveller, take the road—
Singing beside the hedge. What if the bread
Be bitter in thine inn, and thou unshod
To meet the flints?—At least it may be said,
"Because the way is short, I thank thee, God!"

Poetry Study

Title:

Type of Poem:

Use the box to at right to draw a picture of what the poem brings to mind.



Write one thing you liked and did not like about the poem:

Write three adjectives about the poem.

Compose a few lines of your own poem inspired by this work
