

Lord: how do I love thee?



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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 of ideal grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's
most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from praise.
I love thee with a passion put to use
in my old griefs, and with my childhood 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, God, if thou dost choose
I shall love thee better after death.

Elizabeth Browning (1806-1861), *adapted*