

Poetry Break with Jackie Wills

Accompanying Poems

‘How Do I Love Thee?’ (Sonnet 43)

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.	1
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height	2
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight	3
For the ends of being and ideal grace.	4
I love thee to the level of every day’s	5
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.	6
I love thee freely, as men strive for right.	7
I love thee purely, as they turn from praise.	8
I love thee with the passion put to use	9
In my old griefs, and with my childhood’s faith.	10
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose	11
With my lost saints. I love thee with the breath,	12
Smiles, tears, of all my life; and, if God choose,	13
I shall but love thee better after death.	14

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Grief

I tell you, hopeless grief is passionless;	1
That only men incredulous of despair,	2
Half-taught in anguish, through the midnight air	3
Beat upward to God's throne in loud access	4
Of shrieking and reproach. Full desertness,	5
In souls as countries, lieth silent-bare	6
Under the blanching, vertical eye-glare	7
Of the absolute heavens. Deep-hearted man, express	8
Grief for thy dead in silence like to death —	9
Most like a monumental statue set	10
In everlasting watch and moveless woe	11
Till itself crumble to the dust beneath.	12
Touch it; the marble eyelids are not wet:	13
If it could weep, it could arise and go.	14

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