Sonnet 43

Poet: Elizabeth Barrett Browning

What the poem is about:
Speaker writing a love poem to her future husband Robert Browning. She sees love as spiritual and sacred, counts all the ways she can love him and sees love continuing on beyond death.

Form:
Petrarchan Sonnet (an octave followed by a sestet). Usually about love.

Structure:
The octave (first eight lines) present how she will love him. The sestet (last six lines) present how long she has and will love him.

Language:
Religious language (“soul”, “grace”, “praise”, “faith”, etc) shows love is like a religion/faith and is unconditional. The use of anaphora (“I love thee”) shows how many aspects of love she feels and is a rhetorical device used in the Bible.

Themes:
Love as spiritual and sacred, deep and long-lasting/eternal – Sonnet 116, Hour, opposite to, In Paris With You, To His Coy Mistress. Intimacy is more important than physical passion – The Manhunt