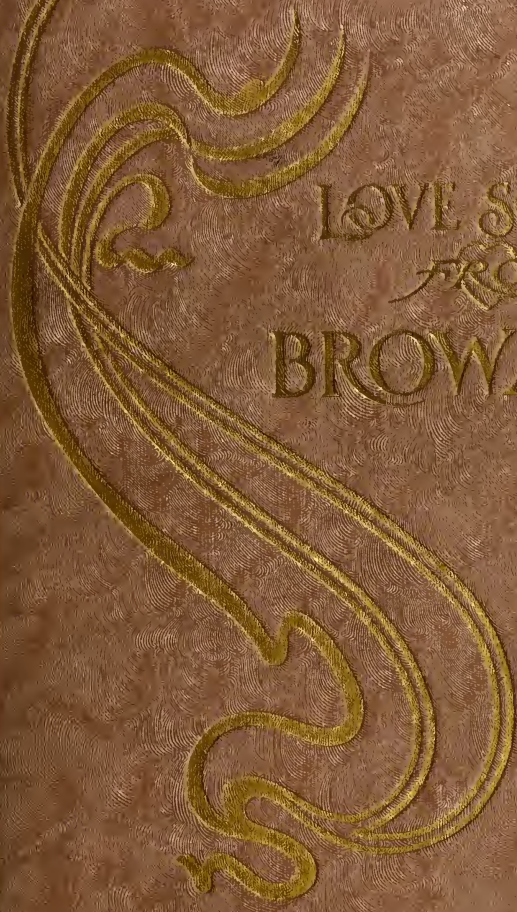




LOVE SONGS  
*FROM*  
BROWNING





Class PT 4242

Book L 6 H 38

Copyright N<sup>o</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

**COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.**









# LOVE SONGS

BY

ROBERT BROWNING

AND

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

SELECTED AND ARRANGED

BY

ETHEL HARRIS

*Illustrated with reproductions from the works  
of the Master Painters*



RAND MCNALLY & COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

CHICAGO

NEW YORK

Love Poems from the works of  
Robert Browning  
and  
Elizabeth Barrett Browning  
*Copyright, 1900,*  
By RAND, McNALLY & COMPANY  
Love Songs by Robert Browning  
and  
Elizabeth Barrett Browning  
*Copyright, 1911,*  
By RAND, McNALLY & COMPANY

PR 4242  
.L6H35

The Rand-McNally Press  
CHICAGO AND NEW YORK



71, 12

©Cl. A 300349



# CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
<i>From Dramatic Lyrics</i>	
Song . . . . .	5
<i>From Dramatic Lyrics</i>	
In a Year . . . . .	6
<i>Magical Nature</i> . . . . .	9
<i>From Dramatic Lyrics</i>	
Life in a Love . . . . .	10
<i>From Dramatic Lyrics</i>	
Meeting at Night . . . . .	11
<i>From Dramatic Lyrics</i>	
Women and Roses . . . . .	12
<i>From Dramatic Lyrics</i>	
A Woman's Last Word . . . . .	14
<i>From The Two Poets of Croisic</i>	
Selection . . . . .	17
<i>From Dramatic Lyrics</i>	
Love Among the Ruins . . . . .	18
<i>From Dramatic Lyrics</i>	
Any Wife to Any Husband . . . . .	22
<i>From Dramatic Lyrics</i>	
The Lost Mistress . . . . .	28
<i>From Dramatic Lyrics</i>	
One Way of Love . . . . .	29
<i>From Dramatic Lyrics</i>	
A Pretty Woman . . . . .	31
<i>From Dramatic Lyrics</i>	
Parting at Morning . . . . .	35
<i>From Dramatic Lyrics</i>	
In Three Days . . . . .	36
<i>From Dramatic Romances</i>	
In a Gondola . . . . .	38
<i>From Dramatic Lyrics</i>	
Misconceptions . . . . .	41

<i>From Asolando: Fancies and Facts</i>	
<i>Poetics</i> . . . . .	42
<i>From Asolando: Fancies and Facts</i>	
<i>Summum Bonum</i> . . . . .	43
<i>A Man's Requirements</i> . . . . .	44
<i>Question and Answer</i> . . . . .	46
<i>From La Saisiaz</i>	
<i>Selection</i> . . . . .	47
<i>From Dramatis Personae</i>	
<i>James Lee's Wife</i>	
IV <i>Along the Beach</i> . . . . .	48
<i>From Ferishtah's Fancies</i>	
<i>Selection</i> . . . . .	50
<i>From Ferishtah's Fancies</i>	
<i>Selection</i> . . . . .	51
<i>Dramatis Personae</i>	
<i>James Lee's Wife</i>	
I <i>James Lee's Wife Speaks at the Window</i>	53
<i>From Dramatic Lyrics</i>	
<i>Garden Fancies</i>	
I. <i>The Flower's Name</i> . . . . .	54
<i>From Dramatis Personae</i>	
<i>A Face</i> . . . . .	56
<i>From Dramatis Personae</i>	
<i>Eurydice to Orpheus</i>	
<i>A Picture by Leighton</i> . . . . .	57
<i>Change Upon Change</i> . . . . .	58
<i>The Best Thing in the World</i> . . . . .	59
<i>Life and Love</i> . . . . .	60
<i>From Last Poems</i>	
<i>My Heart and I</i> . . . . .	61
<i>From Dramatic Lyrics</i>	
<i>A False Step</i> . . . . .	63
<i>My Kate</i> . . . . .	65
<i>The Romance of the Swan's Nest</i> . . . . .	67
<i>From Pacchiarotto</i>	
<i>Prologue</i> . . . . .	73

CONTENTS—*Continued*

iii

	<i>Page</i>
<i>Love</i> . . . . .	75
<i>Proof and Disproof</i> . . . . .	76
<i>Loved Once</i> . . . . .	78
<i>The Lady's "Yes"</i> . . . . .	81
<i>That Day</i> . . . . .	83
<i>From Pippa Passes</i>	
<i>Noon</i>	
<i>Pippa, Singing</i> . . . . .	85
<i>Amy's Cruelty</i> . . . . .	86
<i>A Denial</i> . . . . .	89
<i>A Woman's Shortcomings</i> . . . . .	92
<i>Inclusions</i> . . . . .	94
<i>May's Love</i> . . . . .	95
<i>Insufficiency</i> . . . . .	96

## ILLUSTRATIONS

	<i>Page</i>
<i>"Is she not pure gold, my mistress? Holds earth aught— speak truth— above her?"</i>	4
<i>"Till God's own smile came out: That was thy face!"</i> . . . . .	16
<i>"So, we leave the sweet face fondly there: Be its beauty its sole duty!"</i> . . . . .	30
<i>"This is a spray the Bird clung to, Making it blossom with pleasure"</i> . . . . .	40
<i>"Look in my eyes! Wilt thou change too?"</i> . . . . .	52
<i>"Such a blue inner light from her eyelids outbroke, You looked at her silence and fancied she spoke"</i>	64
<i>"O the old wall here. How I could pass Life in a long Midsummer day"</i> . . . . .	72
<i>"And still cried the maiden, binding her tresses, 'Tis only a page that carols unseen!"</i> . . . . .	84





J. B. GRE

*“Is she not pure gold, my mistress?  
Holds earth aught—speak truth—above her?”*

**From Dramatic Lyrics**

SONG

I.

**N**AY but you, who do not love her,  
Is she not pure gold, my mistress?  
Holds earth aught—speak truth—above her?  
Aught like this tress, see, and this tress,  
And this last fairest tress of all,  
So fair, see, ere I let it fall?

II.

Because, you spend your lives in praising;  
To praise, you search the wide world over:  
Then why not witness, calmly gazing,  
If earth holds aught—speak truth—above her?  
Above this tress, and this, I touch  
But cannot praise, I love so much!

—*Robert Browning*

**From Dramatic Lyrics**

IN A YEAR

I.

NEVER any more,  
While I live,  
Need I hope to see his face  
As before.  
Once his love grown chill,  
Mine may strive:  
Bitterly we re-embrace,  
Single still.

II.

Was it something said,  
Something done,  
Vexed him? was it touch of hand,  
Turn of head?  
Strange! that very way  
Love begun:  
I as little understand  
Love's decay.

III.

When I sewed or drew,  
I recall  
How he looked as if I sung,  
—Sweetly too.  
If I spoke a word,  
First of all  
Up his cheek the color sprung,  
Then he heard.



## IV.

Sitting by my side,  
At my feet,  
So he breathed but air I breathed,  
Satisfied!  
I, too, at love's brim  
Touched the sweet:  
I would die if death bequeathed  
Sweet to him.

## V.

"Speak, I love thee best!"  
He exclaimed:  
"Let thy love my own foretell!"  
I confessed:  
"Clasp my heart on thine  
"Now unblamed,  
"Since upon thy soul as well  
"Hangeth mine!"

## VI.

Was it wrong to own,  
Being truth?  
Why should all the giving prove  
His alone?  
I had wealth and ease,  
Beauty, youth:  
Since my lover gave me love,  
I gave these.

## VII.

That was all I meant,  
—To be just,  
And the passion I had raised,  
To content.

Since he chose to change  
 Gold for dust,  
 If I gave him what he praised  
 Was it strange ?

## VIII.

Would he loved me yet,  
 On and on,  
 While I found some way undreamed  
 —Paid my debt!  
 Gave more life and more,  
 Till, all gone,  
 He should smile "She never seemed  
 "Mine before.

## IX.

"What, she felt the while,  
 "Must I think?  
 "Love's so different with us men!"  
 He should smile:  
 "Dying for my sake—  
 "White and pink!  
 "Can't we touch these bubbles then  
 "But they break?"

## X.

Dear, the pang is brief,  
 Do thy part,  
 Have thy pleasure! How perplexed  
 Grows belief!  
 Well, this cold clay clod  
 Was man's heart:  
 Crumble it, and what comes next?  
 Is it God?

—*Robert Browning*

### Magical Nature

#### I.

**F**LOWER—I never fancied, jewel — I profess you !  
Bright I see and soft I feel the outside of a flower.  
Save but glow inside and—jewel, I should guess you,  
Dim to sight and rough to touch: the glory is the dower.

#### II.

You, forsooth, a flower? Nay, my love, a jewel—  
Jewel at no mercy of a moment in your prime!  
Time may fray the flower-face: kind be time or cruel,  
Jewel, from each facet flash your laugh at time !  
—*Robert Browning*

**From Dramatic Lyrics**

## LIFE IN A LOVE

**E**SCAPE me ?

Never—

Beloved !

While I am I, and you are you,

So long as the world contains us both,

Me the loving and you the loth,

While the one eludes, must the other pursue,

My life is a fault at last, I fear:

It seems too much like a fate, indeed !

Though I do my best I shall scarce succeed.

But what if I fail of my purpose here ?

It is but to keep the nerves at strain,

To dry one's eyes and laugh at a fall,

And, baffled, get up and begin again,—

So the chace takes up one's life, that's all.

While, look but once from your farthest bound

At me so deep in the dust and dark,

No sooner the old hope goes to ground

Than a new one, straight to the self-same mark,

I shape me—

Ever

Removed !

—*Robert Browning*

**From Dramatic Lyrics**

## MEETING AT NIGHT

## I.

THE gray sea and the long black land;  
And the yellow half-moon large and low;  
And the startled little waves that leap  
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,  
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,  
And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.

## II.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;  
Three fields to cross till a farm appears;  
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch  
And blue spurt of a lighted match,  
And a voice less loud thro' its joys and fears,  
Than the two hearts beating each to each!

—*Robert Browning*

## From Dramatic Lyrics

### WOMEN AND ROSES

#### I.

I DREAM of a red-rose tree.  
 And which of its roses three  
 Is the dearest rose to me ?

#### II.

Round and round, like a dance of snow  
 In a dazzling drift, as its guardians, go  
 Floating the women faded for ages,  
 Sculptured in stone, on the poet's pages.  
 Then follow women fresh and gay,  
 Living and loving and loved to-day.  
 Last, in the rear, flee the multitude of maidens,  
 Beauties yet unborn. And all, to one cadence,  
 They circle their rose on my rose tree.

#### III.

Dear rose, thy term is reached,  
 Thy leaf hangs loose and bleached:  
 Bees pass it unimpeached.

#### IV.

Stay then, stoop, since I cannot climb,  
 You, great shapes of the antique time!  
 How shall I fix you, fire you, freeze you,  
 Break my heart at your feet to please you ?  
 Oh, to possess and be possessed!  
 Hearts that beat 'neath each pallid breast!  
 Once but of love, the poesy, the passion,  
 Drink but once and die!—In vain, the same fashion,  
 They circle their rose on my rose tree.

## V.

Dear rose, thy joy's undimmed,  
Thy cup is ruby-rimmed,  
Thy cup's heart nectar-brimmed.

## VI.

Deep, as drops from a statue's plinth  
The bee sucked in by the hyacinth,  
So will I bury me while burning,  
Quench like him at a plunge my yearning,  
Eyes in your eyes, lips on your lips!  
Fold me fast where the cincture slips,  
Prison all my soul in eternities of pleasure,  
Girdle me for once! But no—the old measure,  
They circle their rose on my rose tree.

## VII.

Dear rose without a thorn,  
Thy bud's the babe unborn:  
First streak of a new morn.

## VIII.

Wings, lend wings for the cold, the clear!  
What is far conquers what is near.  
Roses will bloom nor want beholders,  
Sprung from the dust where our flesh moulders.  
What shall arrive with the cycle's change?  
A novel grace and a beauty strange.  
I will make an Eve, be the artist that began her,  
Shaped her to his mind!—Alas! in like manner  
They circle their rose on my rose tree.

—*Robert Browning*

**From Dramatic Lyrics**

## A WOMAN'S LAST WORD

## I.

LET'S contend no more, Love,  
Strive nor weep :  
All be as before, Love,  
—Only sleep!

## II.

What so wild as words are?  
I and thou  
In debate, as birds are,  
Hawk on bough!

## III.

See the creature stalking  
While we speak!  
Hush and hide the talking,  
Cheek on cheek!

## IV.

What so false as truth is,  
False to thee?  
Where the serpent's tooth is  
Shun the tree—

## V.

Where the apple reddens  
Never pry—  
Lest we lose our Edens,  
Eve and I.



## VI.

Be a god and hold me  
With a charm!  
Be a man and fold me  
With thine arm!

## VII.

Teach me, only teach, Love!  
As I ought  
I will speak thy speech, Love,  
Think thy thought—

## VIII.

Meet, if thou require it,  
Both demands,  
Laying flesh and spirit  
In thy hands.

## IX.

That shall be to-morrow  
Not to-night:  
I must bury sorrow  
Out of sight:

## X.

—Must a little weep, Love,  
(Foolish me!)  
And so fall asleep, Love,  
Loved by thee.

—*Robert Browning*



OTTO LINGNER

*“Till God’s own smile came out:  
That was thy face!”*

---

From The Two Poets of Croisic

## SELECTION

## I.

SUCH a starved bank of moss  
Till that May-morn,  
Blue ran the flash across:  
Violets were born!

## II.

Sky—what a scowl of cloud  
Till, near and far,  
Ray on ray split the shroud  
Splendid, a star!

## III.

World—how it walled about  
Life with disgrace  
Till God's own smile came out:  
That was thy face!

—Robert Browning

**From Dramatic Lyrics**

## LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

## I.

WHERE the quiet-colored end of evening smiles,  
Miles and miles  
On the solitary pastures where our sheep  
Half-asleep  
Tinkle homeward thro' the twilight, stray or stop  
As they crop—  
Was the site once of a city great and gay,  
(So they say)  
Of our country's very capital, its prince  
Ages since  
Held his court in, gathered councils, wielding far  
Peace or war.

## II.

Now,—the country does not even boast a tree,  
As you see,  
To distinguish slopes of verdure, certain rills  
From the hills  
Intersect and give a name to, (else they run  
Into one)  
Where the domed and daring palace shot its spires  
Up like fires  
O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a wall  
Bounding all,  
Made of marble, men might march on nor be pressed,  
Twelve abreast.

## III.

And such plenty and perfection, see, of grass  
    Never was!  
Such a carpet as, this summer-time, o'erspreads  
    And embeds  
Every vestige of the city, guessed alone,  
    Stock or stone—  
Where a multitude of men breathed joy and woe  
    Long ago;  
Lust of glory pricked their hearts up, dread of shame  
    Struck them tame;  
And that glory and that shame alike, the gold  
    Bought and sold.

## IV.

Now,—the single little turret that remains  
    On the plains,  
By the caper overrooted, by the gourd  
    Overscored,  
While the patching houseleek's head of blossom winks  
    Through the chinks—  
Marks the basement whence a tower in ancient time  
    Sprang sublime,  
And a burning ring, all round, the chariots traced  
    As they raced,  
And the monarch and his minions and his dames  
    Viewed the games.

## V.

And I know, while thus the quiet-colored eve  
    Smiles to leave  
To their folding, all our many-tinkling fleece  
    In such peace,  
And the slopes and rills in undistinguished gray  
    Melt away—  
That a girl with eager eyes and yellow hair  
    Waits me there  
In the turret whence the charioteers caught soul  
    For the goal,  
When the king looked, where she looks now, breathless,  
    dumb  
    Till I come.

## VI.

But he looked upon the city, every side,  
    Far and wide,  
All the mountains topped with temples, all the glades,  
    Colonnades,  
All the causeys, bridges, aqueducts,—and then,  
    All the men!  
When I do come, she will speak not, she will stand,  
    Either hand  
On my shoulder, give her eyes the first embrace  
    Of my face,  
Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight and speech  
    Each on each.

## VII.

In one year they sent a million fighters forth  
    South and North,  
And they built their gods a brazen pillar high  
    As the sky,  
Yet reserved a thousand chariots in full force—  
    Gold, of course.  
Oh heart! oh blood that freezes, blood that burns!  
    Earth's returns  
For whole centuries of folly, noise and sin!  
    Shut them in,  
With their triumphs and their glories and the rest!  
    Love is best.

—*Robert Browning*

### From Dramatic Lyrics

ANY WIFE TO ANY HUSBAND

I.

MY love, this is the bitterest, that thou—  
 Who art all truth, and who dost love me now  
 As thine eyes say, as thy voice breaks to say—  
 Shouldst love so truly, and couldst love me still  
 A whole long life through, had but love its will,  
 Would death that leads me from thee brook delay.

II.

I have but to be by thee, and thy hand  
 Will never let mine go, nor heart withstand  
 The beating of my heart to reach its place.  
 When shall I look for thee and feel thee gone?  
 When cry for the old comfort and find none?  
 Never, I know! Thy soul is in thy face.

III.

Oh, I should fade—'t is willed so! Might I save,  
 Gladly I would, whatever beauty gave  
 Joy to thy sense, for that was precious too.  
 It is not to be granted. But the soul  
 Whence the love comes, all ravage leaves that whole;  
 Vainly the flesh fades, soul makes all things new.

IV.

It would not be because my eye grew dim  
 Thou couldst not find the love there, thanks to Him  
 Who never is dishonored in the spark  
 He gave us from his fire of fires, and bade  
 Remember whence it sprang, nor be afraid  
 While that burns on, though all the rest grow dark.



## V.

So, how thou wouldst be perfect, white and clean  
Outside as inside, soul and soul's demesne

Alike, this body given to show it by!  
Oh, three-parts through the worst of life's abyss,  
What plaudits from the next world after this,  
Couldst thou repeat a stroke and gain the sky!

## VI.

And is it not the bitterer to think  
That, disengage our hands and thou wilt sink  
Although thy love was love in very deed?  
I know that nature! Pass a festive day,  
Thou dost not throw its relic-flower away  
Nor bid its music's loitering echo speed.

## VII.

Thou let'st the stranger's glove lie where it fell;  
If old things remain old things all is well,  
For thou art grateful as becomes man best:  
And hadst thou only heard me play one tune,  
Or viewed me from a window, not so soon  
With thee would such things fade as with the rest.

## VIII.

I seem to see! We meet and part; 't is brief;  
The book I opened keeps a folded leaf,  
The very chair I sat on, breaks the rank;  
That is a portrait of me on the wall—  
Three lines, my face comes at so slight a call:  
And for all this, one little hour to thank!

## IX.

But now, because the hour through years was fixed,  
Because our inmost beings met and mixed,

Because thou once hast loved me—wilt thou dare  
Say to thy soul and Who may list beside,

“Therefore she is immortally my bride;

“Chance cannot change my love, nor time impair.

## X.

“So, what if in the dusk of life that’s left,

“I, a tired traveller of my sun bereft,

“Look from my path when, mimicking the same,

“The firefly glimpses past me, come and gone?

“—Where was it till the sunset? where anon

“It will be at the sunrise? What’s to blame?”

## XI.

Is it so helpful to thee! Canst thou take  
The mimic up, nor, for the true thing’s sake,

Put gently by such efforts at a beam?

Is the remainder of the way so long,

Thou need’st the little solace, thou the strong?

Watch out thy watch, let weak ones doze and dream!

## XII.

—Ah, but the fresher faces! “Is it true,”

Thou’lt ask, “some eyes are beautiful and new?

“Some hair,—how can one choose but grasp such  
wealth?

“And if a man would press his lips to lips

“Fresh as the wilding hedge-rose-cup there slips

“The dew-drop out of, must it be by stealth?

## XIII.

"It cannot change the love still kept for Her,  
"More than if such a picture I prefer  
    "Passing a day with, to a room's bare side :  
"The painted form takes nothing she possessed,  
"Yet, while the Titian's Venus lies at rest,  
    "A man looks. Once more, what is there to chide?"

## XIV.

So must I see, from where I sit and watch,  
My own self sell myself, my hand attach  
    Its warrant to the very thefts from me—  
Thy singleness of soul that made me proud,  
Thy purity of heart I loved aloud,  
    Thy man's-truth I was bold to bid God see!

## XV.

Love so, then, if thou wilt! Give all thou canst  
Away to the new faces—disentranced,  
    (Say it and think it) obdurate no more :  
Re-issue looks and words from the old mint,  
Pass them afresh, no matter whose the print  
    Image and superscription once they bore!

## XVI.

Re-coin thyself and give it them to spend,—  
It all comes to the same thing at the end,  
    Since mine thou wast, mine art and mine shalt be,  
Faithful or faithless, sealing up the sum  
Or lavish of my treasure, thou must come  
    Back to the heart's place here I keep for thee!

## XVII.

Only, why should it be with stain at all?  
 Why must I, 'twixt the leaves of coronal,  
     Put any kiss of pardon on thy brow?  
 Why need the other women know so much,  
 And talk together, "Such the look and such  
     "The smile he used to love with, then as now!"

## XVIII.

Might I die last and show thee! Should I find  
 Such hardship in the few years left behind,  
     If free to take and light my lamp, and go  
 Into thy tomb, and shut the door and sit,  
 Seeing thy face on those four sides of it  
     The better that they are so blank, I know!

## XIX.

Why, time was what I wanted, to turn o'er  
 Within my mind each look, get more and more  
     By heart each word, too much to learn at first;  
 And join thee all the fitter for the pause  
 'Neath the low doorway's lintel. That were cause  
     For lingering, though thou calledst, if I durst!

## XX.

And yet thou art the nobler of us two:  
 What dare I dream of, that thou canst not do,  
     Outstripping my ten small steps with one stride?  
 I'll say then, here's a trial and a task—  
 Is it to bear?—if easy, I'll not ask:  
     Though love fail, I can trust on in thy pride.

## XXI.

Pride?—when those eyes forestall the life behind  
The death I have to go through!—when I find,

Now that I want thy help most, all of thee!  
What did I fear? Thy love shall hold me fast  
Until the little minute's sleep is past

And I wake saved.—And yet it will not be!

—*Robert Browning*

## From Dramatic Lyrics

## THE LOST MISTRESS

## I.

ALL'S over, then: does truth sound bitter  
As one at first believes?  
Hark, 'tis the sparrows' good-night twitter  
About your cottage eaves!

## II.

And the leaf-buds on the vine are woolly,  
I noticed that, to-day;  
One day more bursts them open fully  
—You know the red turns gray.

## III.

To-morrow we meet the same then, dearest?  
May I take your hand in mine?  
Mere friends are we—well, friends the merest  
Keep much that I resign:

## IV.

For each glance of the eye so bright and black,  
Though I keep with heart's endeavor,—  
Your voice, when you wish the snowdrops back,  
Though it stay in my soul for ever!—

## V.

Yet I will but say what mere friends say,  
Or only a thought stronger;  
I will hold your hand but as long as all may,  
Or so very little longer!

—Robert Browning

**From Dramatic Lyrics**

## ONE WAY OF LOVE

## I.

ALL June I bound the rose in sheaves.  
Now, rose by rose, I strip the leaves  
And strew them where Pauline may pass.  
She will not turn aside? Alas!  
Let them lie. Suppose they die?  
The chance was they might take her eye.

## II.

How many a month I strove to suit  
These stubborn fingers to the lute!  
To-day I venture all I know.  
She will not hear my music? So!  
Break the string; fold music's wing:  
Suppose Pauline had bade me sing!

## III.

My whole life long I learned to love.  
This hour my utmost art I prove  
And speak my passion—heaven or hell?  
She will not give me heaven? 'T is well!  
Lose who may—I still can say,  
Those who win heaven, blest are they!

—*Robert Browning*



N. SICHEL

*“So, we leave the sweet face fondly there:  
Be its beauty its sole duty!”*



**From Dramatic Lyrics**

## A PRETTY WOMAN

## I.

THAT fawn-skin dappled hair of hers,  
And the blue eye  
Dear and dewy,  
And that infantine fresh air of hers!

## II.

To think men cannot take you, Sweet,  
And enfold you,  
Ay, and hold you,  
And so keep you what they make you, Sweet!

## III.

You like us for a glance, you know—  
For a word's sake  
Or a sword's sake,  
All's the same, whate'er the chance, you know.

## IV.

And in turn we make you ours, we say—  
You and youth too,  
Eyes and mouth too,  
All the face composed of flowers, we say.

## V.

All's our own, to make the most of, Sweet—  
Sing and say for,  
Watch and pray for,  
Keep a secret or go boast of, Sweet!

## VI.

But for loving, why, you would not, Sweet,  
    Though we prayed you,  
    Paid you, brayed you  
In a mortar—for you could not, Sweet!

## VII.

So, we leave the sweet face fondly there:  
    Be its beauty  
    Its sole duty!  
Let all hope of grace beyond, lie there!

## VIII.

And while the face lies quiet there,  
    Who shall wonder  
    That I ponder  
A conclusion? I will try it there.

## IX.

As,—why must one, for the love foregone,  
    Scout mere liking?  
    Thunder-striking  
Earth,—the heaven, we looked above for, gone!

## X.

Why, with beauty, needs there money be,  
    Love with liking?  
    Crush the fly-king  
In his gauze, because no honey-bee?

## XI.

May not liking be so simple-sweet,  
If love grew there  
'T would undo there  
All that breaks the cheek to dimples sweet ?

## XII.

Is the creature too imperfect, say ?  
Would you mend it  
And so end it ?  
Since not all addition perfects aye !

## XIII.

Or is it of its kind, perhaps,  
Just perfection—  
Whence, rejection  
Of a grace not to its mind, perhaps ?

## XIV.

Shall we burn up, tread that face at once  
Into tinder,  
And so hinder  
Sparks from kindling all the place at once ?

## XV.

Or else kiss away one's soul on her ?  
Your love-fancies !  
—A sick man sees  
Truer, when his hot eyes roll on her !

## XVI.

Thus the craftsman thinks to grace the rose,—  
Plucks a mold-flower  
For his gold flower,  
Uses fine things that efface the rose.

## XVII.

Rosy rubies make its cup more rose,  
Precious metals  
Ape the petals,—  
Last, some old king locks it up, morose!

## XVIII.

Then how grace a rose? I know a way!  
Leave it, rather.  
Must you gather?  
Smell, kiss, wear it—at last, throw away!

—*Robert Browning*

**From Dramatic Lyrics**

## PARTING AT MORNING

**R**OUND the cape of a sudden came the sea,  
And the sun looked over the mountain's rim :  
And straight was a path of gold for him,  
And the need of a world of men for me.

—*Robert Browning*

**From Dramatic Lyrics**

## IN THREE DAYS

## I.

SO, I shall see her in three days  
And just one night, but nights are short  
Then two long hours, and that is morn.  
See how I come, unchanged, unworn!  
Feel, where my life broke off from thine,  
How fresh the splinters keep and fine,—  
Only a touch and we combine!

## II.

Too long, this time of year, the days!  
But nights, at least the nights are short.  
As night shows where her one moon is,  
A hand's-breadth of pure light and bliss,  
So life's night gives my lady birth  
And my eyes hold her! What is worth  
The rest of heaven, the rest of earth?

## III.

O loaded curls! release your store  
Of warmth and scent, as once before  
The tingling hair did, lights and darks  
Out breaking into fairy sparks,  
When under curl and curl I pried  
After the warmth and scent inside,  
Thro' lights and darks how manifold—  
The dark inspired, the light controlled!  
As early Art embrowns the gold.

## IV.

What great fear, should one say, " Three days  
"That change the world might change as well  
"Your fortune; and if joy delays,  
"Be happy that no worse befell!"  
What small fear, if another says,  
"Three days and one short night beside  
"May throw no shadow on your ways;  
"But years must teem with change untried,  
"With chance not easily defied,  
"With an end somewhere undescried."

No fear!—or, if a fear be born  
This minute, it dies out in scorn.  
Fear? I shall see her in three days  
And one night, now the nights are short,  
Then just two hours, and that is morn.

—*Robert Browning*

## From Dramatic Romances

IN A GONDOLA

*He Sings*

I.

PAST we glide, and past, and past!  
 What's that poor Agnese doing  
 Where they make the shutters fast?  
 Gray Zanobi's just a-wooing  
 To his couch the purchased bride:  
 Past we glide!

II.

Past we glide, and past, and past!  
 Why's the Pucci Palace flaring  
 Like a beacon to the blast?  
 Guests by hundreds, not one caring  
 If the dear host's neck were wried:  
 Past we glide!

*She Sings*

I.

The moth's kiss, first!  
 Kiss me as if you made believe  
 You were not sure, this eve  
 How my face, your flower, had pursed  
 Its petals up; so, here and there  
 You brush it, till I grow aware  
 Who wants me, and wide ope I burst.



## II.

The bee's kiss, now !  
Kiss me as if you entered gay  
My heart at some noonday,  
A bud that dares not disallow  
The claim, so all is rendered up,  
And passively its shattered cup  
Over your head to sleep I bow.

—*Robert Browning*



E. N. A. FEYEN-PERRIN

*"This is a spray the Bird clung to,  
Making it blossom with pleasure.*

## From Dramatic Lyrics

## MISCONCEPTIONS

## I.

THIS is a spray the Bird clung to,  
Making it blossom with pleasure,  
Ere the high tree-top she sprung to,  
Fit for her nest and her treasure.  
Oh, what a hope beyond measure  
Was the poor spray's, which the flying feet hung to,—  
So to be singled out, built in, and sung to!

## II.

This is a heart the Queen leant on,  
Thrilled in a minute erratic,  
Ere the true bosom she bent on,  
Meet for love's regal dalmatic.\*  
Oh, what a fancy ecstatic  
Was the poor heart's, ere the wanderer went on—  
Love to be saved for it, proffered to, spent on!

—Robert Browning

\*A vestment used by ecclesiastics, and formerly by senators and persons of high rank.

**From Asolando: Fancies and Facts**

## POETICS

“SO say the foolish!” Say the foolish so, Love?  
“Flower she is, my rose”—or else “My very  
swan is she”—

Or perhaps “Yon maid-moon, blessing earth below,  
Love,  
That art thou!”—to them, belike: no such vain  
words from me.

“Hush, rose, blush! no balm like breath,” I chide it:  
“Bend thy neck its best, swan,—hers the whiter  
curve!”

Be the moon the moon: my Love I place beside it:  
What is she? Her human self,—no lower word  
will serve.

—*Robert Browning*

*From Asolando: Fancies and Facts*

SUMMUM BONUM

ALL the breath and the bloom of the year in the bag  
of one bee :

All the wonder and wealth of the mine in  
the heart of one gem :

In the core of one pearl all the shade and the shine  
of the sea :

Breath and bloom, shade and shine,—wonder,  
wealth, and—how far above them—

Truth, that's brighter than gem,

Trust, that's purer than pearl,—

Brightest truth, purest trust in the universe—all were  
for me

In the kiss of one girl.

—*Robert Browning*

**A Man's Requirements**

## I.

LOVE me, Sweet, with all thou art,  
Feeling, thinking, seeing ;  
Love me in the lightest part,  
Love me in full being.

## II.

Love me with thine open youth  
In its frank surrender ;  
With the vowing of thy mouth,  
With its silence tender.

## III.

Love me with thine azure eyes,  
Made for earnest granting ;  
Taking color from the skies,  
Can Heaven's truth be wanting ?

## IV.

Love me with their lids, that fall  
Snow-like at first meeting ;  
Love me with thine heart, that all  
Neighbors then see beating.

## V.

Love me with thine hand stretched out  
Freely—open-minded :  
Love me with thy loitering foot,—  
Hearing one behind it.

## VI.

Love me with thy voice, that turns  
Sudden faint above me ;  
Love me with thy blush that burns  
When I murmur *Love me !*

## VII.

Love me with thy thinking soul,  
Break it to love-sighing ;  
Love me with thy thoughts that roll  
On through living—dying.

## VIII.

Love me in thy gorgeous airs,  
When the world has crowned thee ;  
Love me, kneeling at thy prayers,  
With the angels round thee.

## IX.

Love me pure, as musers do,  
Up the woodlands shady:  
Love me gayly, fast and true,  
As a winsome lady.

## X.

Through all hopes that keep us brave,  
Farther off or nigher,  
Love me for the house and grave,  
And for something higher.

## XI.

Thus, if thou wilt prove me, Dear,  
Woman's love no fable,  
I will love *thee*—half a year—  
As a man is able.

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

### Question and Answer

#### I.

LOVE you seek for, presupposes  
    Summer heat and sunny glow.  
Tell me, do you find moss-roses  
    Budding, blooming in the snow?  
Snow might kill the rose-tree's root —  
Shake it quickly from your foot,  
    Lest it harm you as you go.

#### II.

From the ivy where it dapples  
    A gray ruin, stone by stone,  
Do you look for grapes or apples,  
    Or for sad green leaves alone?  
Pluck the leaves off, two or three —  
Keep them for morality  
    When you shall be safe and gone.

*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*



From *La Saisiaz*

## SELECTION

## I.

GOOD, to forgive ;  
Best, to forget !  
Living, we fret ;  
Dying, we live.  
Fretless and free,  
Soul, clap thy pinion !  
Earth have dominion,  
Body, o'er thee !

## II.

Wander at will,  
Day after day,—  
Wander away,  
Wandering still—  
Soul that canst soar !  
Body may slumber :  
Body shall cumber  
Soul-flight no more.

## III.

Waft of soul's wing !  
What lies above ?  
Sunshine and Love,  
Skyblue and Spring !  
Body hides—where ?  
Ferns of all feather,  
Mosses and heather,  
Yours be the care !

—*Robert Browning*

From *Dramatis Personae*

JAMES LEE'S WIFE

IV.—ALONG THE BEACH

IV.

O LOVE, Love, no, Love! not so, indeed!  
 You were just weak earth, I knew:  
 With much in you waste, with many a weed,  
 And plenty of passions run to seed,  
 But a little good grain too.

V.

And such as you were, I took you for mine:  
 Did not you find me yours,  
 To watch the olive and wait the vine,  
 And wonder when rivers of oil and wine  
 Would flow, as the Book assures?

VI.

Well, and if none of these good things came,  
 What did the failure prove?  
 The man was my whole world, all the same,  
 With his flowers to praise or his weeds to blame,  
 And, either or both, to love.

VII.

Yet this turns now to a fault—there! there!  
 That I do love, watch too long,  
 And wait too well, and weary and wear;  
 And 'tis all an old story, and my despair  
 Fit subject for some new song:

## VIII.

"How the light, light love, he has wings to fly

"At suspicion of a bond:

"My wisdom has bidden your pleasure good-bye,

"Which will turn up next in a laughing eye,

"And why should you look beyond?"

—*Robert Browning*

*From Ferishtah's Fancies*

## SELECTION

ASK not one least word of praise !  
Words declare your eyes are bright ?  
What then meant that summer day's  
Silence spent in one long gaze ?  
Was my silence wrong or right ?

Words of praise were all to seek !  
Face of you and form of you,  
Did they find the praise so weak  
When my lips just touched your cheek—  
Touch which let my soul come through ?

—*Robert Browning*

**From Ferishtah's Fancies**

## SELECTION

**R**OUND us the wild creatures, overhead the trees,  
Underfoot the moss-tracks,—life and love with  
these!

I to wear a fawn-skin, thou to dress in flowers:  
All the long lone Summer-day, that greenwood life of  
ours!

Rich-pavilioned, rather,—still the world without,—  
Inside—gold-roofed, silk-walled silence round about!  
Queen it thou on purple,—I, at watch and ward  
Couched beneath the columns, gaze, thy slave, love's  
guard!

So, for us no world? Let throngs press thee to me!  
Up and down amid men, heart by heart fare we!  
Welcome squalid vesture, harsh voice, hateful face!  
God is soul, souls I and thou: with souls should souls  
have place.

—*Robert Browning*



OSKAR BEGAS

*“Look in my eyes!  
Wilt thou change too?”*

## Dramatis Personae

JAMES LEE'S WIFE

I.—JAMES LEE'S WIFE SPEAKS AT THE WINDOW

I.

AH, Love, but a day  
And the world has changed!  
The sun's away,  
And the bird estranged;  
The wind has dropped,  
And the sky's deranged:  
Summer has stopped.

II.

Look in my eyes!  
Wilt thou change too?  
Should I fear surprise?  
Shall I find aught new  
In the old and dear,  
In the good and true,  
With the changing year?

III.

Thou art a man,  
But I am thy love.  
For the lake, its swan;  
For the dell, its dove;  
And for thee—(oh, haste!)  
Me, to bend above,  
Me, to hold embraced.

—Robert Browning

## From Dramatic Lyrics

### GARDEN FANCIES

#### I.—THE FLOWER'S NAME

##### I.

HERE'S the garden she walked across,  
 Arm in my arm, such a short while since :  
 Hark, now I push its wicket, the moss  
 Hinders the hinges and makes them wince !  
 She must have reached this shrub ere she turned,  
 As back with that murmur the wicket swung ;  
 For she laid the poor snail, my chance foot spurned,  
 To feed and forget it the leaves among.

##### II.

Down this side of the gravel-walk  
 She went while her robe's edge brushed the box :  
 And here she paused in her gracious talk  
 To point me a moth on the milk-white phlox.  
 Roses, ranged in valiant row,  
 I will never think that she passed you by !  
 She loves you, noble roses, I know ;  
 But yonder, see, where the rock-plants lie !

##### III.

This flower she stopped at, finger on lip,  
 Stooped over, in doubt, as settling its claim ;  
 Till she gave me, with pride to make no slip,  
 Its soft meandering Spanish name :  
 What a name ! Was it love or praise ?  
 Speech half-asleep or song half-awake ?  
 I must learn Spanish, one of these days,  
 Only for that slow sweet name's sake.



## IV.

Roses, if I live and do well,  
I may bring her, one of these days,  
To fix you fast with as fine a spell,  
Fit you each with his Spanish phrase;  
But do not detain me now; for she lingers  
There, like sunshine over the ground,  
And ever I see her soft white fingers  
Searching after the bud she found.

## V.

Flower, you Spaniard, look that you grow not,  
Stay as you are and be loved for ever!  
Bud, if I kiss you 'tis that you blow not:  
Mind, the shut pink mouth opens never!  
For while it pouts, her fingers wrestle,  
Twinkling the audacious leaves between,  
Till round they turn and down they nestle—  
Is not the dear mark still to be seen?

## VI.

Where I find her not, beauties vanish;  
Whither I follow her, beauties flee:  
Is there no method to tell her in Spanish  
June's twice June since she breathed it with me?  
Come, bud, show me the least of her traces,  
Treasure my lady's lightest footfall!—  
Ah, you may flout and turn up your faces—  
Roses, you are not so fair after all!

—*Robert Browning*

**From Dramatis Personae**

## A FACE

IF one could have that little head of hers  
Painted upon a background of pale gold,  
Such as the Tuscan's early art prefers!  
No shade encroaching on the matchless mold  
Of those two lips, which should be opening soft  
In the pure profile; not as when she laughs,  
For that spoils all: but rather as if aloft  
Yon hyacinth, she loves so, leaned its staff's  
Burthen of honey-colored buds to kiss  
And capture 'twixt the lips apart for this.  
Then her lithe neck, three fingers might surround,  
How it should waver on the pale gold ground  
Up to the fruit-shaped, perfect chin it lifts!  
I know, Correggio loves to mass, in rifts  
Of heaven, his angel faces, orb on orb  
Breaking its outline, burning shades absorb:  
But these are only massed there, I should think,  
Waiting to see some wonder momentarily  
Grow out, stand full, fade slow against the sky  
(That's the pale ground you'd see this sweet face by),  
All heaven, meanwhile, condensed into one eye  
Which fears to lose the wonder, should it wink.

—*Robert Browning*

*From Dramatis Personae*

EURYDICE TO ORPHEUS

A PICTURE BY LEIGHTON

**B**UT give them me, the mouth, the eyes, the brow !  
Let them once more absorb me ! One look now  
Will lap me round for ever, not to pass  
Out of its light, though darkness lie beyond :  
Hold me but safe again within the bond  
Of one immortal look ! All woe that was,  
Forgotten, and all terror that may be,  
Defied,—no past is mine, no future : look at me !

—*Robert Browning*

## Change Upon Change

### I.

**F**IVE months ago the stream did flow,  
 The lilies bloomed within the sedge,  
 And we were lingering to and fro,  
 Where none will track thee in this snow,  
 Along the stream, beside the hedge.  
 Ah, Sweet, be free to love and go!  
 For if I do not hear thy foot,  
 The frozen river is as mute,  
 The flowers have dried down to the root:  
 And why, since these be changed since May,  
 Shouldst *thou* change less than *they*?

### II.

And slow, slow as the winter snow  
 The tears have drifted to mine eyes;  
 And my poor cheeks, five months ago  
 Set blushing at thy praises so,  
 Put paleness on for a disguise.  
 Ah, Sweet, be free to praise and go!  
 For if my face is turned too pale,  
 It was thine oath that first did fail,—  
 It was thy love proved false and frail,—  
 And why, since these be changed enow,  
 Should *I* change less than *thou*?  
—Elizabeth Barrett Browning

### The Best Thing in the World

WHAT'S the best thing in the world ?  
June-rose, by May-dew impearled ;  
Sweet south-wind, that means no rain ;  
Truth, not cruel to a friend ;  
Pleasure, not in haste to end ;  
Beauty, not self-decked and curled  
Till its pride is over-plain ;  
Light, that never makes you wink ;  
Memory, that gives no pain ;  
Love, when, *so*, you're loved again.  
What's the best thing in the world ?  
—Something out of it, I think.

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

**Life and Love**

## I.

**F**AST this Life of mine was dying,  
Blind already and calm as death,  
Snowflakes on her bosom lying  
Scarcely heaving with her breath.

## II.

Love came by, and having known her  
In a dream of fabled lands,  
Gently stooped, and laid upon her  
Mystic chrism of holy hands ;

## III.

Drew his smile across her folded  
Eyelids, as the swallow dips ;  
Breathed as finely as the cold did  
Through the locking of her lips.

## IV.

So, when Life looked upward, being  
Warmed and breathed on from above,  
What sight could she have for seeing,  
Evermore . . . but only LOVE ?

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

## From Last Poems

## MY HEART AND I

## I.

ENOUGH! we're tired, my heart and I.  
We sit beside the headstone thus,  
And wish that name were carved for us.  
The moss reprints more tenderly  
The hard types of the mason's knife,  
As heaven's sweet life renews earth's life  
With which we're tired, my heart and I.

## II.

You see we're tired, my heart and I.  
We dealt with books, we trusted men,  
And in our own blood drenched the pen,  
As if such colors could not fly.  
We walked too straight for fortune's end,  
We loved too true to keep a friend;  
At last we're tired, my heart and I.

## III.

How tired we feel, my heart and I!  
We seem of no use in the world;  
Our fancies hang gray and uncurled  
About men's eyes indifferently;  
Our voice which thrilled you so, will let  
You sleep; our tears are only wet:  
What do we here, my heart and I?

## IV.

So tired, so tired, my heart and I!  
It was not thus in that old time  
When Ralph sat with me 'neath the lime  
To watch the sunset from the sky.

“Dear love, you’re looking tired,” he said;  
 I, smiling at him, shook my head:  
 ’Tis now we’re tired, my heart and I.

## V.

So tired, so tired, my heart and I!  
 Though now none takes me on his arm  
 To fold me close and kiss me warm  
 Till each quick breath end in a sigh  
 Of happy languor. Now, alone,  
 We lean upon this graveyard stone,  
 Uncheered, unkissed, my heart and I.

## VI.

Tired out we are, my heart and I.  
 Suppose the world brought diadems  
 To tempt us, crusted with loose gems  
 Of powers and pleasures? Let it try.  
 We scarcely care to look at even  
 A pretty child, or God’s blue heaven,  
 We feel so tired, my heart and I.

## VII.

Yet who complains? My heart and I?  
 In this abundant earth no doubt  
 Is little room for things worn out:  
 Disdain them, break them, throw them by!  
 And if before the days grew rough  
 We *once* were loved, used,—well enough,  
 I think, we’ve fared, my heart and I.

—Elizabeth Barrett Browning



**From Dramatic Lyrics**

## A FALSE STEP

## I.

SWEET, thou hast trod on a heart.  
Pass; there's a world full of men;  
And women as fair as thou art  
Must do such things now and then.

## II.

Thou only hast stepped unaware,—  
Malice, not one can impute;  
And why should a heart have been there  
In the way of a fair woman's foot?

## III.

It was not a stone that could trip,  
Nor was it a thorn that could rend:  
Put up thy proud under-lip!  
'T was merely the heart of a friend.

## IV.

And yet peradventure one day  
Thou, sitting alone at the glass,  
Remarking the bloom gone away,  
Where the smile in its dimplement was,

## V.

And seeking around thee in vain  
From hundreds who flattered before,  
Such a word as "Oh, not in the main  
Do I hold thee less precious, but more!" . . .

## VI.

Thou'lt sigh, very like, on thy part,  
"Of all I have known or can know,  
I wish I had only that Heart  
I trod upon ages ago!"

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*



OTTO LINGNER

*"Such a blue inner light from her eyelids outbroke,  
You looked at her silence and fancied she spoke."*

**My Kate**

## I.

SHE was not as pretty as women I know,  
And yet all your best made of sunshine and snow  
Drop to shade, melt to nought in the long-trodden  
ways,  
While she's still remembered on warm and cold days—  
My Kate.

## II.

Her air had a meaning, her movements a grace;  
You turned from the fairest to gaze on her face:  
And when you had once seen her forehead  
and mouth,  
You saw as distinctly her soul and her truth—  
My Kate.

## III.

Such a blue inner light from her eyelids outbroke,  
You looked at her silence and fancied she spoke:  
When she did, so peculiar yet soft was the tone,  
Though the loudest spoke also, you heard her alone—  
My Kate.

## IV.

I doubt if she said to you much that could act  
As a thought or suggestion: she did not attract  
In the sense of the brilliant or wise: I infer  
'T was her thinking of others made you think of her—  
My Kate.

## V.

She never found fault with you, never implied  
 Your wrong by her right; and yet men at her side  
 Grew nobler, girls purer, as through the whole town  
 The children were gladder that pulled at her gown—  
 My Kate.

## VI.

None knelt at her feet confessed lovers in thrall;  
 They knelt more to God than they used,—that  
 was all:  
 If you praised her as charming, some asked what you  
 meant,  
 But the charm of her presence was felt when she  
 went—  
 My Kate.

## VII.

The weak and the gentle, the ribald and rude,  
 She took as she found them, and did them all good;  
 It always was so with her—see what you have!  
 She has made the grass greener even here . . .  
 with her grave—  
 My Kate.

## VIII.

My dear one!—when thou wast alive with the rest,  
 I held thee the sweetest and loved thee the best:  
 And now thou art dead, shall I not take thy part  
 As thy smiles used to do for thyself, my sweet Heart—  
 My Kate?  
 —Elizabeth Barrett Browning

## The Romance of the Swan's Nest

"So the dreams depart,  
So the fading phantoms flee,  
And the sharp reality  
Now must act its part."

—WESTWOOD'S *Beads from a Rosary*.

### I.

LITTLE Ellie sits alone  
'Mid the beeches of a meadow,  
By a stream-side on the grass,  
And the trees are showering down  
Doubles of their leaves in shadow  
On her shining hair and face.

### II.

She has thrown her bonnet by,  
And her feet she has been dipping  
In the shallow water's flow:  
Now she holds them nakedly  
In her hands, all sleek and dripping,  
While she rocketeth to and fro.

### III.

Little Ellie sits alone,  
And the smile she softly uses  
Fills the silence like a speech,  
While she thinks what shall be done,  
And the sweetest pleasure chooses  
For her future within reach.

## IV.

Little Ellie in her smile  
Chooses—"I will have a lover  
Riding on a steed of steeds:  
He shall love me without guile,  
And to *him* I will discover  
The swan's nest among the reeds.

## V.

"And the steed shall be red-roan,  
And the lover shall be noble,  
With an eye that takes the breath:  
And the lute he plays upon  
Shall strike ladies into trouble,  
As his sword strikes men to death.

## VI.

"And the steed it shall be shod  
All in silver, housed in azure,  
And the mane shall swim the wind;  
And the hoofs along the sod  
Shall flash onward and keep measure,  
Till the shepherds look behind.

## VII.

"But my lover will not prize  
All the glory that he rides in,  
When he gazes in my face:  
He will say, 'O Love, thine eyes  
Build the shrine my soul abides in  
And I kneel here for thy grace!'

## VIII.

“Then, ay, then he shall kneel low,  
With the red-roan steed anear him  
Which shall seem to understand,  
Till I answer, ‘Rise and go!  
For the world must love and fear him,  
Whom I gift with heart and hand.’

## IX.

“Then he will arise so pale,  
I shall feel my own lips tremble  
With a *yes* I must not say,  
Nathless maiden-brave, ‘Farewell,’  
I will utter, and dissemble—  
‘Light to-morrow with to-day!’

## X.

“Then he’ll ride among the hills  
To the wide world past the river,  
There to put away all wrong;  
To make straight distorted wills,  
And to empty the broad quiver  
Which the wicked bear along.

## XI.

“Three times shall a young foot-page  
Swim the stream and climb the mountain  
And kneel down beside my feet—  
‘Lo, my master sends this gage,  
Lady, for thy pity’s counting!  
What wilt thou exchange for it?’

## XII.

“And the first time I will send  
A white rosebud for a guerdon,  
And the second time, a glove;  
But the third time—I may bend  
From my pride, and answer—‘Pardon  
If he comes to take my love.’

## XIII.

“Then the young foot-page will run,  
Then my lover will ride faster,  
Till he kneeleth at my knee:  
‘I am a duke’s eldest son,  
Thousand serfs do call me master,  
But, O Love, I love but *thee!*’

## XIV.

“He will kiss me on the mouth  
Then, and lead me as a lover  
Through the crowds that praise his deeds;  
And, when soul-tied by one troth,  
Unto *him* I will discover  
That swan’s nest among the reeds.”

## XV.

Little Ellie, with her smile  
Not yet ended, rose up gayly,  
Tied the bonnet, donned the shoe,  
And went homeward, round a mile,  
Just to see, as she did daily,  
What more eggs were with the two.



## XVI.

Pushing through the elm-tree copse,  
Winding up the stream, light-hearted,  
Where the osier pathway leads,  
Past the boughs she stoops—and stops.  
Lo, the wild swan had deserted,  
And a rat had gnawed the reeds!

## XVII.

Ellie went home sad and slow.  
If she found the lover ever,  
With his red-roan steed of steeds,  
Sooth I know not; but I know  
She could never show him—never,  
That swan's nest among the reeds!

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*



C. FROSCHL

*“O the old wall here! How I could pass  
Life in a long Midsummer day.”*

## From Bacchiarotto

### PROLOGUE

#### I.

O THE old wall here! How I could pass  
 Life in a long Midsummer day,  
 My feet confined to a plot of grass,  
 My eyes from a wall not once away!

#### II.

And lush and lithe do the creepers clothe  
 Yon wall I watch, with a wealth of green:  
 Its bald red bricks draped, nothing loth,  
 In lappets of tangle they laugh between.

#### III.

Now, what is it makes pulsate the robe?  
 Why tremble the sprays? What life o'erbrims  
 The body,—the house, no eye can probe,—  
 Divined as, beneath a robe, the limbs?

#### IV.

And there again! But my heart may guess  
 Who tripped behind; and she sang perhaps:  
 So, the old wall throbbed, and its life's excess  
 Died out and away in the leafy wraps.

#### V.

Wall upon wall are between us: life  
 And song should away from heart to heart.  
 I—prison-bird, with a ruddy strife  
 At breast, and a lip whence storm-notes start—

## VI.

Hold on, hope hard in the subtle thing  
That's spirit: though cloistered fast, soar free;  
Account as wood, brick, stone, this ring  
Of the rueful neighbors, and — forth to thee!

—*Robert Browning*

## Love

WE cannot live, except thus mutually  
We alternate, aware or unaware,  
The reflex act of life: and when we bear  
Our virtue outward most impulsively,  
Most full of invocation, and to be  
Most instantly compellant, certes there  
We live most life, whoever breathes most air  
And counts his dying years by sun and sea.  
But when a soul, by choice and conscience, doth  
Throw out her full force on another soul,  
The conscience and the concentration both  
Make mere life, Love. For Life in perfect whole  
And aim consummated, is Love in sooth,  
As Nature's magnet-heat rounds pole with pole.

—Elizabeth Barrett Browning

### Proof and Disproof

#### I.

DOST thou love me, my Belovèd ?  
 Who shall answer yes or no ?  
 What is provèd or disprovèd  
 When my soul inquireth so,  
 Dost thou love me, my Belovèd ?

#### II.

I have seen thy heart to-day,  
 Never open to the crowd,  
 While to love me aye and aye  
 Was the vow as it was vowed  
 By thine eyes of steadfast gray.

#### III.

Now I sit alone, alone—  
 And the hot tears break and burn,  
 Now, Belovèd, thou art gone,  
 Doubt and terror have their turn.  
 Is it love that I have known?

#### IV.

I have known some bitter things,—  
 Anguish, anger, solitude.  
 Year by year an evil brings,  
 Year by year denies a good ;  
 March winds violate my springs.

#### V.

I have known how sickness bends,  
 I have known how sorrow breaks,—  
 How quick hopes have sudden ends,  
 How the heart thinks till it aches  
 Of the smile of buried friends.

## VI.

Last, I have known *thee*, my brave  
Noble thinker, lover, doer!  
The best knowledge last I have.  
But thou comest as the thrower  
Of fresh flowers upon a grave.

## VII.

Count what feelings used to move me!  
Can this love assort with those?  
Thou, who art so far above me,  
Wilt thou stoop so, for repose?  
Is it true that thou canst love me?

## VIII.

Do not blame me if I doubt thee.  
I can call love by its name  
When thine arm is wrapt about me;  
But even love seems not the same,  
When I sit alone, without thee.

## IX.

In thy clear eyes I descried  
Many a proof of love, to-day;  
But to-night, those unbelied  
Speechful eyes being gone away,  
There's the proof to seek, beside

## X.

Dost thou love me, my Belovèd?  
Only *thou* canst answer yes!  
And, thou gone, the proof's disprovèd,  
And the cry rings answerless—  
Dost thou love me, my Belovèd?

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

## Loved ONCE

## I.

I CLASSED, appraising once,  
 Earth's lamentable sounds,—the welladay,  
 The jarring yea and nay,  
 The fall of kisses on unanswering clay,  
 The sobbed farewell, the welcome mournfuller,—  
 But all did leaven the air  
 With a less bitter leaven of sure despair  
 Than these words—"I loved ONCE."

## II.

And who saith "I loved ONCE"?  
 Not angels—whose clear eyes, love, love forsee,  
 Love, through eternity,  
 And by To Love do apprehend To Be.  
 Not God, called LOVE, His noble crown-  
 name casting,  
 A light too broad for blasting:  
 The great God, changing not from everlasting,  
 Saith never "I loved ONCE."

## III.

Oh, never is "Loved ONCE"  
 Thy word, Thou Victim-Christ, misprized friend!  
 Thy cross and curse may rend,  
 But having loved Thou lovest to the end.  
 This is man's saying—man's: too weak to move  
 One spherèd star above,  
 Man desecrates the eternal God-word Love  
 By his No More, and Once.



## IV.

How say ye "We loved once,"  
Blasphemers? Is your earth not cold enow,  
Mourners, without that snow?  
Ah friends, and would ye wrong each other so?  
And could ye say of some whose love is known,  
Whose prayers have met your own,  
Whose tears have fallen for you, whose smiles have  
shone  
So long,—“We loved them ONCE”?

## V.

Could ye "We loved her once"  
Say calm of me, sweet friends, when out of sight?  
When hearts of better right  
Stand in between me and your happy light?  
Or when, as flowers kept too long in the shade,  
Ye find my colors fade,  
And all that is not love in me decayed?  
Such words—Ye loved me ONCE!

## VI.

Could ye "We loved her once"  
Say cold of me when further put away  
In earth's sepulchral clay,  
When mute the lips which deprecate to-day?  
Not so! not then—least then! When life is shriven  
And death's full joy is given,—  
Of those who sit and love you up in heaven  
Say not "We loved them once."

## VII.

Say never ye loved ONCE:  
God is too near above, the grave beneath,  
And all our moments breathe  
Too quick in mysteries of life and death,  
For such a word. The eternities avenge  
Affections light of range.  
There comes no change to justify that change,  
Whatever comes—Loved ONCE!

## VIII.

And yet that same word ONCE  
Is humanly acceptive. Kings have said,  
Shaking a discrowned head,  
“We ruled once,”—dotards, “We once taught and  
led,”  
Cripples once danced i' the vines, and bards  
approved,  
Were once by scornings moved:  
But love strikes one hour—LOVE! Those  
*never* loved  
Who dreamed that they loved ONCE.

—Elizabeth Barrett Browning

## The Lady's "Yes"

## I.

"YES," I answered you last night ;  
"No," this morning, sir, I say :  
Colors seen by candle-light  
Will not look the same by day.

## II.

When the viols played their best,  
Lamps above and laughs below.  
*Love me* sounded like a jest,  
Fit for *yes* or fit for *no*.

## III.

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.

## IV.

Yet the sin is on us both ;  
Time to dance is not to woo ;  
Wooing light makes fickle troth,  
Scorn of *me* recoils on *you*.

## V.

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

## VI.

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

## VII.

By your truth she shall be true,  
Ever true, as wives of yore;  
And her *yes* once said to you,  
SHALL be Yes forevermore.

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

## That Day

## I.

I STAND by the river where both of us stood,  
And there is but one shadow to darken the flood;  
And the path leading to it, where both used to pass,  
Has the step of but one, to take dew from the grass,—  
One forlorn since that day.

## II.

The flowers of the margin are many to see;  
None stoops at my bidding to pluck them for me.  
The bird in the alder sings loudly and long,—  
My low sound of weeping disturbs not his song,  
As thy vow did, that day.

## III.

I stand by the river, I think of the vow;  
Oh, calm as the place is, vow-breaker, be thou!  
I leave the flower growing, the bird unreprieved;  
Would I trouble *thee* rather than *them*, my beloved,—  
And my lover that day?

## IV.

Go, be sure of my love, by that treason forgiven;  
Of my prayers, by the blessings they win thee from  
Heaven;  
Of my grief—(guess the length of the sword by the  
sheath's)  
By the silence of life, more pathetic than death's!  
Go,—be clear of that day!  
—Elizabeth Barrett Browning



PAUL THUMANN

*“And still cried the maiden, binding her tresses,  
‘Tis only a page that carols unseen!’”*

From *Pippa Passes*

NOON

PIPPA, *singing*

I.

GIVE her but a least excuse to love me!  
When—where—  
How—can this arm establish her above me,  
If fortune fixed her as my lady there,  
There already, to eternally reprove me?  
("Hist!"—said Kate the Queen;  
But "Oh!" cried the maiden, binding her tresses,  
" 'T is only a page that carols unseen,  
"Crumbling your hounds their messes!")

II.

Is she wronged?—To the rescue of her honor,  
My heart!  
Is she poor?—What costs it to be styled a donor?  
Merely an earth to cleave, a sea to part.  
But that fortune should have thrust all this upon her!  
("Nay, list!"—bade Kate the Queen;  
And still cried the maiden, binding her tresses,  
" 'T is only a page that carols unseen,  
"Fitting your hawks their jesses!")

—*Robert Browning*

## Amy's Cruelty

## I.

FAIR Amy of the terraced house,  
Assist me to discover  
Why you who would not hurt a mouse  
Can torture so your lover.

## II.

You give your coffee to the cat,  
You stroke the dog for coming,  
And all your face grows kinder at  
The little brown bee's humming.

## III.

But when *he* haunts your door . . . the town  
Marks coming and marks going . . .  
You seem to have stitched your eyelids down  
To that long piece of sewing!

## IV.

You never give a look, not you,  
Nor drop him a "Good morning,"  
To keep his long day warm and blue,  
So fretted by your scorning.

## V.

She shook her head—"The mouse and bee  
For crumb or flower will linger:  
The dog is happy at my knee,  
The cat purrs at my finger.



## VI.

"But *he . . . to him*, the least thing given  
Means great things at a distance;  
He wants my world, my sun, my heaven,  
Soul, body, whole existence.

## VII.

'They say love gives as well as takes;  
But I'm a simple maiden,—  
My mother's first smile when she wakes  
I still have smiled and prayed in.

## VIII.

"I only know my mother's love  
Which gives all and asks nothing;  
And this new loving sets the groove  
Too much the way of loathing.

## IX.

"Unless he gives me all in change,  
I forfeit all things by him:  
The risk is terrible and strange—  
I tremble, doubt . . . deny him.

## X.

"He's sweetest friend or hardest foe,  
Best angel or worst devil;  
I either hate or . . . love him so,  
I can't be merely civil!

3  
3  
3  
3

## XI.

“You trust a woman who puts forth  
Her blossoms thick as summer’s?  
You think she dreams what love is worth,  
Who casts it to new-comers?”

## XII.

“Such love’s a cowslip-ball to fling  
A moment’s pretty pastime;  
*I* give . . . all me, if anything,  
The first time and the last time.”

## XIII.

“Dear neighbor of the trellised house,  
A man should murmur never,  
Though treated worse than dog and mouse,  
Till doated on for ever!”

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

## A Denial

## I.

WE have met late—it is too late to meet,  
O friend, not more than friend!  
Death's forecome shroud is tangled round my feet,  
And if I step or stir, I touch the end.

In this last jeopardy  
Can I approach thee, I, who cannot move?  
How shall I answer thy request for love?  
Look in my face and see.

## II.

I love thee not, I dare not love thee! go  
In silence; drop my hand.  
If thou seek roses, seek them where they blow  
In garden-alleys, not in desert-sand.  
Can life and death agree,  
That thou shouldst stoop thy song to my complaint?  
I cannot love thee. If the word is faint,  
Look in my face and see.

## III.

I might have loved thee in some former days.  
Oh, then, my spirits had leapt  
As now they sink, at hearing thy love-praise!  
Before these faded cheeks were overwept,  
Had this been asked of me,  
To love thee with my whole strong heart and head,—  
I should have said still . . . yes, but *smiled* and said,  
“Look in my face and see!”

## IV

But now . . . God sees me, God, who took my  
heart

And drowned it in life's surge.

In all your wide warm earth I have no part—

A light song overcomes me like a dirge,

Could Love's great harmony

The saints keep step to when their bonds are loose,

Not weigh me down? am I a wife to choose?

Look in my face and see—

## V.

While I behold, as plain as one who dreams,

Some woman of full worth,

Whose voice, as cadenced as a silver stream's,

Shall prove the fountain-soul which sends it forth;

One younger, more thought-free

And fair and gay, than I, thou must forget,

With brighter eyes than these . . . which are not  
wet . . .

Look in my face and see!

## VI.

So farewell thou, whom I have known too late

To let thee come so near.

Be counted happy while men call thee great,

And one belovèd woman feels thee dear!—

Not I!—that cannot be.

I am lost, I am changed,—I must go farther, where

The change shall take me worse, and no one dare

Look in my face and see.

## VII.

Meantime I bless thee. By these thoughts of mine  
I bless thee from all such!  
I bless thy lamp to oil, thy cup to wine,  
Thy hearth to joy, thy hand to an equal touch  
Of loyal troth. For me,  
I love thee not, I love thee not!—away!  
Here's no more courage in my soul to say,  
"Look in my face and see."

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

## A Woman's Shortcomings

### I.

SHE has laughed as softly as if she sighed,  
She has counted six, and over,  
Of a purse well filled and a heart well tried—  
Oh, each a worthy lover !  
They "give her time ;" for her soul must slip  
Where the world has set the grooving ;  
She will lie to none with her fair red lip :  
But love seeks truer loving.

### II.

She trembles her fan in a sweetness dumb,  
As her thoughts were beyond recalling,  
With a glance for *one*, and a glance for *some*,  
From her eyelids rising and falling ;  
Speaks common words with a blushful air,  
Hears bold words, unproving ;  
But her silence says—what she never will swear—  
And love seeks better loving.

### III.

Go, lady, lean to the night-guitar  
And drop a smile to the bringer ;  
Then smile as sweetly when he is far,  
At the voice of an in-door singer.  
Bask tenderly beneath tender eyes ;  
Glance lightly, on their removing ;  
And join new vows to old perjuries—  
But dare not call it loving.

## IV.

Unless you can think, when the song is done,  
No other is soft in the rhythm ;  
Unless you can feel, when left by One,  
That all men else go with him ;  
Unless you can know, when unpraised by his breath,  
That your beauty itself wants proving ;  
Unless you can swear "For life, for death !"—  
Oh, fear to call it loving !

## V.

Unless you can muse in a crowd all day  
On the absent face that fixed you ;  
Unless you can love, as the angels may,  
With the breadth of heaven betwixt you ;  
Unless you can dream that his faith is fast,  
Through behaving and unbehaving ;  
Unless you can *die* when the dream is past—  
Oh, never call it loving !

—Elizabeth Barrett Browning

**Inclusions**

## I.

OH, wilt thou have my hand, Dear, to lie along in  
thine ?

As a little stone in a running stream, it seems to lie and  
pine.

Now drop the poor pale hand, Dear, unfit to plight with  
thine.

## II.

Oh, wilt thou have my cheek, Dear, drawn closer to  
thine own ?

My cheek is white, my cheek is worn, by many a tear  
run down.

Now leave a little space, Dear, lest it should wet thine  
own.

## III.

Oh, must thou have my soul, Dear, commingled with  
thy soul ?—

Red grows the cheek, and warm the hand; the part is in  
the whole :

Nor hands nor cheeks keep separate, when soul is  
joined to soul.

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*



**May's Love**

## I.

YOU love all, you say,  
    Round, beneath, above me:  
Find me then some way  
    Better than to love me,  
Me, too, dearest May!

## II.

O world-kissing eyes  
    Which the blue heavens melt to;  
I, sad, otherwise,  
    Loathe the sweet looks dealt to  
All things—men and flies.

## III.

You love all, you say:  
    Therefore, Dear, abate me  
Just your love, I pray!  
    Shut your eyes and hate me—  
Only *me*—fair May!

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

### Insufficiency

#### I.

**T**HERE is no one beside thee and no one above thee,  
Thou standest alone as the nightingale sings!  
And my words that would praise thee are impotent  
things,  
For none can express thee though all should approve  
thee.  
I love thee so, Dear, that I only can love thee.

#### II.

Say, what can I do for thee? weary thee, grieve  
thee?  
Lean on thy shoulder, new burdens to add?  
Weep my tears over thee, making thee sad?  
Oh, hold me not—love me not! let me retrieve thee.  
I love thee so, Dear, that I only can leave thee.

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*







NOV 1 1911

One copy del. to Cat. Div.

2161 1 NOV 1 1917

NOV 1 1917

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 389 434 4

