Sonnet 116

1  Let me not to the marriage of true minds
   Admit impediments; love is not love
   Which alters when it alteration finds,
   Or bends with the remover to remove:

5  O, no, it is an ever-fixèd mark,
   That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
   It is the star to every wand'ring bark,
   Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

10  Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
   Within his bending sickle's compass come;
   Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
   But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

   If this be error and upon me proved,
   I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

William Shakespeare
Sonnet 43

1 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.

5 I love thee to the level of everyday’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.

10 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.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Purpose: To describe the feelings inspired by boundless, enduring love.
See especially: Questions 7, 10

Relationships: The poem’s speaker is addressing his or her object of affection. Love, the poem implies, is sustained through both life and death.
See especially: Questions 6, 8, 10

Richness: The comparisons evoke other times of intense feeling (lines 9-10), as well as everyday constancy (lines 5-6).
See especially: Question 9

Style: Browning uses passionate punctuation (e.g., dashes, exclamation marks) to convey strong emotion.

Structure: Browning uses a different sonnet structure than Shakespeare. This one goes: ABBA ABBA CDCD CD

Spotlight On: William Shakespeare & Elizabeth Barrett Browning
William Shakespeare (1564-1616) is widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English canon and one of the world’s best playwrights. He wrote 38 plays, 154 sonnets, and many other poems over the course of his life. Important themes in his sonnets include love, beauty, and mortality. His sonnets’ construction of ngiveness special distinction to the break between the 2nd and 3rd quatrains. The final couplets are usually somewhat separate from the quatrains, commenting on or examining the message of the rest of the sonnet in a new way.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861) is considered by many to be England’s greatest female poet. Her first poem was published anonymously at age 14, and despite serious illnesses, she continued writing and publishing poetry her entire life. She secretly married poet Robert Browning despite her father’s objections, and “Sonnet 43” is from her collection of love poems which she wrote during their happy fourteen-year marriage. Her poems are known for their skilled and sensitive portrayal of strong feelings.

Ideas for Connected Writing Activities
- Write a story describing a relationship where love is expressed as described in “Sonnet 43.”
- Choose a title for each poem and explain why the titles you have chosen are appropriate. Use evidence from the poem to support your points.

Humanities Connections
- Research the life of Elizabeth Barrett Browning to discover when she might have written “Sonnet 43.”
- Design a drawing, illustration, painting, or sculpture that embodies the ideas expressed in either poem.
- Research Shakespeare to find out about the rumors surrounding the object of the affection expressed in this poem.
“Sonnet 116” by William Shakespeare

1. According to “Sonnet 116,” love is
   A. an impediment — (OOP) line 1-2 students may not equate “the marriage of true minds” with “love,” or may be looking for clues surrounding the first reference to “love” in line 2
   ✓ B. an ever-fixed mark — (line 5)
   C. a tempest — (OOP) line 6, love “looks on tempests” but is not one
   D. Time’s fool — (OOP) line 9 “Love’s not Time’s fool”

2. In line 2 of “Sonnet 116,” what does the word impediments mean?
   A. inconsistencies — (OOP) plausible using a “substitute in another word” strategy, since Shakespeare would not wish to “admit inconsistencies” in love
   ✓ B. obstacles
   C. impertinence — (OOB) same beginning letters and similar ending sound, but unrelated meaning
   D. virtues — (OOB) student may not have tested meaning in context

3. What is the theme of “Sonnet 116”?
   ✓ A. True love remains steady. — can be inferred from phrases describing love as “never shaken” and “alters not”
   B. Even the strongest love is temporary. — (OOP) may be plausible from students’ own experiences, but the text suggests the opposite
   C. Love changes as life changes. — (OOP) text suggests the opposite
   D. Age and time alter love. — (OOP) “alters,” is used in lines 3, 11

4. Based on the ideas about love expressed in “Sonnet 116,” which of the following is a metaphor with which Shakespeare might agree?
   A. Love is a storm that never lets up — (OOP) contains the idea of consistency, but has a negative connotation
   B. Love is like a red rose. — (OOP) familiar-sounding, but misses the concept of consistency and is a simile, not a metaphor
   C. Love is like an ancient tree. — (OOP) contains the idea of consistency, but is a simile, not a metaphor
   ✓ D. Love is a lighthouse that shines steadily. — can be inferred from the images in the sonnet of love as steady, constant, unchanging
5. In the couplet at the end of "Sonnet 116", Shakespeare asserts that, if he is proved wrong about his ideas on love, then
   ✓ A. he has never written a poem and nobody has ever been in love.
   B. he is not a writer and he has never been in love. — (OOP) plausible read of "I never writ" but missed close read of "no man ever loved"
   C. he doesn’t like writing and he doesn’t like the feeling of love. — (OOB)
   D. he will stop writing because he can’t imagine ever being in love. — (OOP) not plausible based on a close read of these lines

"Sonnet 43" by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

6. According to "Sonnet 43," love
   ✓ A. can survive death.
   B. involves loss.— (OOP) "lose" and "lost" appear in lines 11-12
   C. can consume the soul.— (OOP) the "soul" appears, but not in the context of being consumed
   D. is for the young.— (OOB) nothing in the text suggests this

7. The main purpose of "Sonnet 43" is to
   ✓ A. articulate the feelings of love.
   B. pay tribute to a lost lover.— (OOB) poem celebrates love without loss
   C. honor God.— (OOP) "God" appears, but this is a love poem
   D. eulogize Grace. — (OOP) "Grace" appears, but not as a person

8. Which of the following best summarizes the idea expressed in lines 2-4 of "Sonnet 43"?
   A. Love is out of sight.— (OOP) this phrase appears in line 3, but students must recognize that the colloquial "out of sight" (meaning "great") does not fit the tone of the poem or time of the author
   B. Love is at an end.— (OOP) students may think "the soul" is finite
   ✓ C. Love is boundless.
   D. Love is wonderful.— (OOB) Browning generally seems to think so, but it’s not the idea expressed in these lines

9. Which of the following best paraphrases lines 5-6 of "Sonnet 43"?
   A. "I need to love you." — (OOP) the word "need" appears
   B. "I love you to the sky and back."— (OOB)
   C. "I love you quietly and passionately." — (OOP) the speaker may feel this way, but it’s not the best paraphrase of these lines
   ✓ D. "I love you every moment of the day and night."

10. In both sonnets, love is portrayed as
    ✓ A. selfish and childish. — (OOP) "Sonnet 43" line 10
    B. timeless and enduring.
    C. dangerous.— (OOB)
    D. stormy and stubborn. — (OOP) "Sonnet 116" line 6
Sonnets are 14-line poems, traditionally about love, that follow particular rhythm and rhyme schemes. The word “sonnet” comes from the Italian “sonetto,” which means “little song.” These two sonnets are by writers of different genders from different centuries, but they express similar ideas about love. Read these two poems and answer the questions that follow.

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### FAST-R Answer Sheet

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<th>Name</th>
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Completely fill the circle for the correct answer.

Write your answer to the open response prompt in the lined space below. If your teacher directs you to do so.

| 1. | A | B | C | D |
| 2. | A | B | C | D |
| 3. | A | B | C | D |
| 4. | A | B | C | D |
| 5. | A | B | C | D |
| 6. | A | B | C | D |
| 7. | A | B | C | D |
| 8. | A | B | C | D |
| 9. | A | B | C | D |
| 10. | A | B | C | D |

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**OFFICE USE ONLY**

| RESEARCH: | Y | N |
| OPEN RESPONSE: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |