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**'Sonnet 43' by Elizabeth Barrett Browning**

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Sonnet 43 has become so familiar that some of the ideas and expressions in it have become part of our shared understanding or ideas about romantic love. The activities on clichés and parodies will help students to get an idea of just how well known the poem is.

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**Clichés**

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The first line of this poem has become a cliché of romantic love. The Oxford English Dictionary describes a cliché as: 'a hackneyed or overused phrase or opinion; a very predictable or unoriginal thing'.

Ask students to work with a partner to come up with as many clichés of romantic love as they can. These could be sayings, images, behaviour patterns - any predictable or overused ways of expressing romantic love for another person.

Once students have collected their clichés together, they could make them into a collage. Ask them to search online or find images from newspapers or magazines to create their display.

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**Parodies**

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A parody is an imitation of a writer's style, often for comic effect. Because this poem, and particularly its first line, is so well known, it has often been parodied.

Ask students to search online for parodies of this text. They should choose the one they think is the funniest or most original and share it with the rest of the class.

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**Cinematic links**

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The parody work could link to the film *10 Things I Hate About You* (starring Julia Stiles and Heath Ledger). In the film, 'How do I love thee?' becomes 'How do I loathe thee?'. In one particularly relevant scene, the main character Kat reads a 'poetic' list of Patrick's shortcomings: 'I hate the way...'. By the end of the poem the hate list has turned into something quite different.

Students will enjoy watching the film, or just this excerpt.

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**Slideshow response/visual montage**

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Students could *either* work together to produce a slideshow of music and images to accompany their own audio recording of the poem, or produce a visual/audio response to the poem. This could be personal, including music and photographs, or simply be something that encapsulates the feelings and emotional responses triggered by the poem.