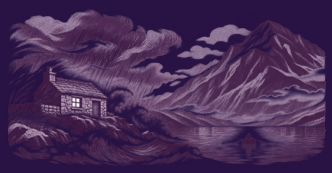
SONNET 29 – ‘I THINK OF THEE!’



Elizabeth Barrett Browning

WHAT HAPPENS? Thoughts of the beloved become so abundant that the speaker calls for real presence.

BIG IDEA **Imagination nourishes love but must give way when it conceals the real person it desires.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

“my thoughts do twine and bud”

Extended plant metaphor

Thoughts grow vigorously, but their abundance risks concealing the beloved’s distinct reality.

“I will not have my thoughts instead of thee”

Early argumentative turn

The refusal redirects the poem away from imagining the beloved and towards a real encounter.

“Renew thy presence;”

Imperative

The speaker actively asks for the beloved’s return.

“I am too near thee.”

Reversal

The final intimacy transforms the meaning of the opening declaration.

FORM

A 14-line Petrarchan sonnet with an early argumentative turn and an extended plant metaphor.

CONTEXT

From Sonnets from the Portuguese (1850), the poem gives a woman an assertive voice in the expression of desire.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Love’s Philosophy: desire for closeness. Letters From Yorkshire: connection across distance.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Thoughts grow

EXUBERANT

The speaker’s imagining spreads so vigorously that it begins to hide its object.

Turn towards presence

URGENT AND COMMANDING

A qualification redirects the poem from fantasy towards an encounter.

Final closeness

JOYFUL

Physical presence makes the opening activity of imagining unnecessary.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

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