

THE
ENIGMA
OF

POE

THE ENIGMA OF POE

Edited by
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PREFACE

The Enigma of Poe focuses on certain important problems in the interpretation and evaluation of Edgar Allan Poe's life and character, his reputation, and his achievement as a critic, poet, and writer of short stories. The materials here presented fall into three general sections:

- 1) Imaginative and critical works by Poe
- 2) Selected letters of Poe and his circle
- 3) Biographical and critical evaluations of Poe

The poems and stories in the first group are intended to introduce the student to Poe's subjects, themes, and techniques. On the basis of the material provided, he may formulate his own evaluations, and, if he desires, he may compare his estimates with those of critics represented in the third section. Inclusion of variant versions of five poems permits the student to analyze the careful revisions of a highly conscious prosodist. In addition, by considering the poems and stories in the light of the selections from Poe's critical writing, he may observe the extent to which Poe's practice exemplifies his theory.

The letters in the second section are not intended to present a comprehensive picture; they have been selected to illuminate certain aspects of Poe's life and character. Most of the letters are by Poe himself; others, however, some to Poe and some about him, have been included to provide perspective.

The works which comprise the third section fall, in general, into one or the other of two basic categories: evaluations of Poe's life and reputation, and evaluations of his achievement as a writer. The biographical materials have been drawn from accounts by Poe himself and by his contemporaries; later studies, which provide interpretations and syntheses of the available data, have not been included. The critiques of Poe's works have been chosen to emphasize different aspects of his achievement and to illustrate contrasting points of view.

The materials with which the student is confronted in this book constitute an important part of the evidence with which a scholar must work in attempting to solve the enigma of Poe. The student who uses this text will certainly enlarge his knowledge of Poe the man and writer. More important, however, is the fact that he can learn to examine and evaluate evidence, to consider the problems posed by conflicting data or interpretations, and to arrive at a considered judgment which he can defend.

The editors hope that *The Enigma of Poe* not only will help the student to acquire the skills of research but also will encourage him to strive for that objectivity and maturity upon which responsible thought and conduct in all areas of human endeavor should be based.

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EDGAR ALLAN POE: A CHRONOLOGY

- 1809 Edgar Poe born in Boston January 19, son of David Poe, Jr., and Elizabeth Arnold Poe, actors.
- 1810 After desertion of family by father, taken to Richmond by mother.
- 1811 After death of mother December 8, taken into family of John Allan, tobacco exporter, who becomes his legal guardian but never formally adopts him. Renamed Edgar Allan Poe.
- 1815–1820 Goes with Mr. and Mrs. Allan to Great Britain. Attends, among other schools, the grammar school at Irvine, Scotland (1815), and Manor House School at Stoke Newington, near London (1817–1820).
- 1820–1825 Back in Richmond, begins to write poetry. Jane Stith Stanard ("Helen"), mother of school friend, dies (1824). Becomes engaged to Sarah Elmira Royster.
- 1826 Enters University of Virginia at Charlottesville in February. Withdraws at Christmas (at the end of the term) because Allan refuses to pay foster son's gambling debts. Learns that Sarah Elmira Royster has become engaged to another man.
- 1827 Quarrels with Allan over debts. Goes to Boston (probably in April). Publishes there *Tamerlane and Other Poems*. Enlists in U. S. Army under the alias of Edgar A. Perry (May 26). His battery arrives at Fort Moultrie near Charleston, S. C. (November 18).
- 1828 Goes to Fortress Monroe, Virginia (December 15).
- 1829 Visits Richmond after death of Mrs. Allan (February 28). Becomes reconciled with Allan. Sergeant-Major "Edgar A. Perry" receives honorable discharge from army April 15. Goes to Baltimore. Stays at the home of his aunt, Mrs. Maria Clemm (August). Publishes *Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems* (December).
- 1830 Quarrels with Allan (May). Enters West Point July 1.
- 1831 Deliberately disobeys orders and neglects duties in order to ensure dismissal from cadet corps. Leaves West Point February 19; sentence of dismissal takes effect March 6. Publishes *Poems*, Second Edition, in New York (March). Goes to Baltimore, and lives again at home of Mrs. Clemm.
- 1832 Visits Richmond. Concludes relations with Allan, who has remarried. Publishes five short stories in the *Philadelphia Saturday Courier*.
- 1833 Receives prize (offered by *Baltimore Saturday Visiter*) for "Ms. Found in a Bottle" (October). Meets John Pendleton Kennedy.
- 1834 Allan dies March 27.
- 1835 Through good offices of Kennedy, becomes affiliated with *Southern Literary Messenger*, Richmond. Becomes successively contributor, assistant editor, and editor. Secretly marries his 13-year-old cousin Virginia, daughter of Mrs. Maria Clemm (September 22).
- 1836 Remarries Virginia in public ceremony May 16.
- 1837 Gives up editorship of *Southern Literary Messenger* (January). Returns to New York (February).
- 1838 Goes with family to Philadelphia.
- 1839 Becomes in July, and remains for about a year, associate editor of *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*. Publishes in Philadelphia *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (December; title page bears date 1840).
- 1841 Meets Rufus Wilmot Griswold. Becomes in February, and remains for about a year, editor of *Graham's Magazine*.

- 1843 Tries unsuccessfully to found magazine of his own. Receives prize (offered by *Philadelphia Dollar Newspaper*) for "The Gold Bug." Becomes connected with *Philadelphia Saturday Museum*.
- 1844 Moves in April with family to New York. Works for *New York Evening Mirror*, edited by N. P. Willis.
- 1845 Through good offices of James Russell Lowell, becomes affiliated with *Broadway Journal*. Publishes "The Raven" in Willis's *Evening Mirror* (January 29; February 8). Begins association with Mrs. Frances Osgood. Publishes *Tales* and *The Raven and Other Poems*. Meets Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman.
- 1846 Moves to Fordham.
- 1847 Virginia Poe dies January 30. Writes "Ulalume."
- 1848 Becomes emotionally involved with Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman. Writes first important letter to Mrs. Charles ("Annie") Richmond (November 16). Signs marriage contract with Mrs. Whitman (December 15). Little more than a week later Mrs. Whitman countermands publication of the banns.
- 1849 Writes "Annabel Lee." Goes to Richmond (July). Becomes engaged to boyhood sweetheart, Sarah Elmira Royster Shelton, now a widow. Dies in Baltimore October 7.

Poe: Poems

The 1845 version of "Lenore" is reprinted below from *The Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, New York: W. J. Widdleton, 1876, I, 12-13. All the other poems are reprinted from *The Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*, edited by Killis Campbell, Boston: Ginn and Company, 1917.

IMITATION

[First version of
"A Dream Within a Dream"]

- 26 A dark unfathom'd tide
Of interminable pride—
A mystery, and a dream,
Should my early life seem;
I say that dream was fraught
With a wild, and waking thought
Of beings that have been,
Which my spirit hath not seen,
Had I let them pass me by,
27 With a dreaming eye! 10
Let none of earth inherit
That vision on my spirit;
Those thoughts I would controul,
As a spell upon his soul:
For that bright hope at last
And that light time have past,
And my worldly rest hath gone
With a sight as it pass'd on:
I care not tho' it perish
With a thought I then did cherish. 20
[1827]¹

TO ——— ———

[Second version of
"A Dream Within a Dream"]

1

- Should my early life seem,
[As well it might,] a dream—
Yet I build no faith upon
26 The king Napoleon—
I look not up afar
For my destiny in a star:

¹ The date following each version of a poem given in two or more versions is the date of publication of that version.

2

In parting from you now
Thus much I will avow—
There are beings, and have been 10
Whom my spirit had not seen
Had I let them pass me by
With a dreaming eye—
If my peace hath fled away
In a night—or in a day—
In a vision—or in none—
Is it therefore the less gone?—

3

- I am standing 'mid the roar 27
Of a weather-beaten shore,
And I hold within my hand
Some particles of sand— 20
How few! and how they creep
Thro' my fingers to the deep!
My early hopes? no—they
Went gloriously away,
Like lightning from the sky
At once—and so will I. 20

4

So young? ah! no—not now— 28
Thou hast not seen my brow,
But they tell thee I am proud—
They lie—they lie aloud—
My bosom beats with shame
At the paltriness of name
With which they dare combine 30
A feeling such as mine—
Nor Stoic? I am not:
In the terror of my lot
I laugh to think how poor
That pleasure "to endure!"
What! shade of Zeno!—I!
Endure!—no—no—defy.
[1829]

2 *The Enigma of Poe*

A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM

- 26 Take this kiss upon the brow!
And, in parting from you now,
Thus much let me avow —
You are not wrong, who deem
That my days have been a dream;
Yet if hope has flown away
In a night, or in a day,
In a vision, or in none,
Is it therefore the less *gone*?
27 All that we see or seem
Is but a dream within a dream.

I stand amid the roar
Of a surf-tormented shore,
And I hold within my hand
Grains of the golden sand —
How few! yet how they creep
Through my fingers to the deep,
While I weep — while I weep!
O God! can I not grasp
Them with a tighter clasp?
O God! can I not save
One from the pitiless wave?
Is *all* that we see or seem
But a dream within a dream?
[1849]

A PÆAN

[First version of "Lenore"]

- I
68 How shall the burial rite be read?
The solemn song be sung?
The requiem for the loveliest dead,
That ever died so young?

II
Her friends are gazing on her,
And on her gaudy bier,
And weep! — oh! to dishonor
Dead beauty with a tear!

- III
69 They loved her for her wealth —
And they hated her for her pride — 10
But she grew in feeble health,
And they *love* her — that she died.

IV

They tell me (while they speak
Of her "costly broider'd pall")
That my voice is growing weak —
That I should not sing at all —

V

- Or that my tone should be 70
Tun'd to such solemn song
So mournfully — so mournfully,
10 That the dead may feel no wrong. 20

VI

But she is gone above,
With young Hope at her side,
And I am drunk with love
Of the dead, who is my bride. —

VII

- Of the dead — dead who lies
All perfum'd there,
20 With the death upon her eyes,
And the life upon her hair.

VIII

Thus on the coffin loud and long
I strike — the murmur sent 30
Through the grey chambers to my song,
Shall be the accompaniment.

IX

- Thou died'st in thy life's June — 71
But thou did'st not die too fair:
Thou did'st not die too soon,
Nor with too calm an air.

X

From more than fiends on earth,
Thy life and love are riven,
To join the untainted mirth
Of more than thrones in heaven — 40

XI

- Therefore, to thee this night 72
I will no requiem raise,
10 But waft thee on thy flight,
With a Pæan of old days.
[1831]

LENORE

[Second version]

- 68 Ah, broken is the golden bowl!
 The spirit flown forever!
 Let the bell toll! — A saintly soul
 Glides down the Stygian river!
 And let the burial rite be read —
 The funeral song be sung —
 A dirge for the most lovely dead
 That ever died so young!
 And, Guy De Vere,
 Hast *thou* no tear? 10
 Weep now or nevermore!
 See, on yon drear
 And rigid bier,
 Low lies thy love Lenore!
- 69 “Yon heir, whose cheeks of pallid hue
 With tears are streaming wet,
 Sees only, through
 Their crocodile dew,
 A vacant coronet —
 False friends! ye loved her for her wealth 20
 And hated her for pride,
 And, when she fell in feeble health,
 Ye blessed her — that she died.
 How *shall* the ritual, then, be read?
 The requiem *how* be sung
 For her most wrong’d of all the dead
 That ever died so young?”
- 70 *Peccavimus!*²
 But rave not thus!
 And let the solemn song 30
 Go up to God so mournfully that *she* may feel no wrong!
 The sweet Lenore
 Hath “gone before”
 With young hope at her side,
 And thou art wild
 For the dear child
 That should have been thy bride —
 For her, the fair
 And debonair,
 That now so lowly lies — 40
 The life still there
 Upon her hair,
 The death upon her eyes.

² “We have sinned.”

71 “Avaunt! — to-night
 My heart is light —
 No dirge will I upraise,
 But waft the angel on her flight
 With a Pæan of old days!
 Let *no* bell toll!
 Lest her sweet soul,
 Amid its hallow’d mirth
 Should catch the note
 As it doth float
 Up from the damnéd earth —
 To friends above, from fiends below, th’ indignant
 ghost is riven —
 From grief and moan
 To a gold throne
 Beside the King of Heaven!”
 [1843]

50

LENORE

I,12 Ah, broken is the golden bowl! the spirit flown forever!
 Let the bell toll! — a saintly soul floats on the Stygian river;
 And, Guy De Vere, hast *thou* no tear? — weep now or never more!
 See! on yon drear and rigid bier low lies thy love, Lenore!
 Come! let the burial rite be read — the funeral song be sung! —
 An anthem for the queenliest dead that ever died so young —
 A dirge for her the doubly dead in that she died so young.

 “Wretches! ye loved her for her wealth and hated her for her pride,
 And when she fell in feeble health, ye blessed her — that she died!
 How *shall* the ritual, then, be read? — the requiem how be sung
 By you — by yours, the evil eye, — by yours, the slanderous tongue
 That did to death the innocence that died, and died so young?”

I,13 *Peccavimus*; but rave not thus! and let a Sabbath song
 Go up to God so solemnly the dead may feel no wrong!
 The sweet Lenore hath “gone before,” with Hope, that flew beside,
 Leaving thee wild for the dear child that should have been thy bride —
 For her, the fair and *debonair*, that now so lowly lies,
 The life upon her yellow hair but not within her eyes —
 The life still there, upon her hair — the death upon her eyes.

 “Avaunt! to-night my heart is light. No dirge will I upraise,
 But waft the angel on her flight with a Pæan of old days!
 Let *no* bell toll! — lest her sweet soul, amid its hallowed mirth,
 Should catch the note, as it doth float up from the damnéd Earth.
 To friends above, from fiends below, the indignant ghost is riven —
 From Hell unto a high estate far up within the Heaven —
 From grief and groan, to a golden throne, beside the King of Heaven.”
 [1845]

10

20

TO HELEN

[First version]

- 56 Helen, thy beauty is to me
 Like those Nicéan barks of yore,
 That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
 The weary, way-worn wanderer bore
 To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
 Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
 Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
 To the beauty of fair Greece
 And the grandeur of old Rome.

10

Lo! in that little window-niche
 How statue-like I see thee stand,
 The folded scroll within thy hand!
 Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
 Are Holy Land!

[1831]

TO HELEN

- 56 Helen, thy beauty is to me
 Like those Nicéan barks of yore,
 That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
 The weary, way-worn wanderer bore
 To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
 Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
 Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
 To the glory that was Greece,
 And the grandeur that was Rome.

10

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
 How statue-like I see thee stand,
 The agate lamp within thy hand!
 Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
 Are Holy Land!

[1845]

THE VALLEY NIS

[First version of "The Valley of Unrest"]

- 72 Far away — far away —
 Far away — as far at least
 Lies that valley as the day
 Down within the golden east —
 All things lovely — are not they
 Far away — far away?

It is called the valley Nis.
 And a Syriac tale there is
 Thereabout which Time hath said
 Shall not be interpreted. 10
 Something about Satan's dart —
 Something about angel wings —
 Much about a broken heart —
 All about unhappy things:
 But "the valley Nis" at best
 Means "the valley of unrest."
 Once it smil'd a silent dell
 Where the people did not dwell,
 Having gone unto the wars —
 And the sly, mysterious stars, 20
 With a visage full of meaning,
 O'er the unguarded flowers were leaning:
 Or the sun ray dripp'd all red
 Thro' the tulips overhead,
 Then grew paler as it fell
 On the quiet Asphodel.

73

Now the *unhappy* shall confess
 Nothing there is motionless:
 Helen, like thy human eye 30
 There th' uneasy violets lie —
 There the reedy grass doth wave
 Over the old forgotten grave —
 One by one from the tree top 74
 There the eternal dews do drop —
 There the vague and dreamy trees
 Do roll like seas in northern breeze
 Around the stormy Hebrides —
 There the gorgeous clouds do fly,
 Rustling everlastingly,
 Through the terror-stricken sky, 40
 Rolling like a waterfall
 O'er the horizon's fiery wall —
 There the moon doth shine by night
 With a most unsteady light —
 There the sun doth reel by day
 "Over the hills and far away."
 [1831]

THE VALLEY OF UNREST

Once it smiled a silent dell 72
 Where the people did not dwell;
 They had gone unto the wars,
 Trusting to the mild-eyed stars,

6 *The Enigma of Poe*

- 73 Nightly, from their azure towers,
To keep watch above the flowers,
In the midst of which all day
The red sun-light lazily lay.
Now each visiter shall confess
The sad valley's restlessness.
Nothing there is motionless —
Nothing save the airs that brood
Over the magic solitude.
- 74 Ah, by no wind are stirred those trees
That palpitate like the chill seas
Around the misty Hebrides!
Ah, by no wind those clouds are driven
That rustle through the unquiet Heaven
Uneasily, from morn till even,
Over the violets there that lie
In myriad types of the human eye —
Over the lilies there that wave
And weep above a nameless grave!
They wave: — from out their fragrant tops
Eternal dew comes down in drops.
They weep: — from off their delicate stems
Perennial tears descend in gems.
[1845]

INTRODUCTION

[Second version of "Romance"]

- 49 Romance, who loves to nod and sing,
With drowsy head and folded wing,
Among the green leaves as they shake
Far down within some shadowy lake,
To me a painted parouquet
Hath been — a most familiar bird —
Taught me my alphabet to say, —
To lisp my very earliest word,
While in the wild-wood I did lie
A child — with a most knowing eye.
- Succeeding years, too wild for song,
Then roll'd like tropic storms along,
Where, tho' the garish lights that fly,
Dying along the troubled sky
Lay bare, thro' vistas thunder-riven,
The blackness of the general Heaven,
That very blackness yet doth fling
Light on the lightning's silver wing.
- For, being an idle boy lang syne,
Who read Anacreon, and drank wine,

- I early found Anacreon rhymes
Were almost passionate sometimes —
And by strange alchemy of brain
His pleasures always turn'd to pain —
His naivete to wild desire —
- 10 His wit to love — his wine to fire —
And so, being young and dipt in folly
I fell in love with melancholy,
And used to throw my earthly rest
And quiet all away in jest — 30
I could not love except where Death
Was mingling his with Beauty's breath —
Or Hymen, Time, and Destiny
Were stalking between her and me.
- O, then the eternal Condor years, 50
So shook the very Heavens on high,
With tumult as they thunder'd by;
I had no time for idle cares,
Thro' gazing on the unquiet sky!
Od if an hour with calmer wing 40
Its down did on my spirit fling,
That little hour with lyre and rhyme
To while away — forbidden thing!
My heart half fear'd to be a crime
Unless it trembled with the string.
But *now* my soul hath too much room —
Gone are the glory and the gloom —
The black hath mellow'd into grey,
And all the fires are fading away.
- My draught of passion hath been deep —
I revell'd, and I now would sleep — 51
And after-drunkenness of soul
Succeeds the glories of the bowl —
An idle longing night and day
To dream my very life away.
- 10 But dreams — of those who dream as I,
Aspiringly, are damned, and die:
Yet should I swear I mean alone,
By notes so very shrilly blown,
To break upon Time's monotone, 60 51
While yet my vapid joy and grief
Are tintless of the yellow leaf —
Why not an imp the graybeard hath,
Will shake his shadow in my path —
And even the graybeard will o'erlook
Connivingly my dreaming-book.
[1831]

ROMANCE

49 Romance, who loves to nod and sing,
 With drowsy head and folded wing,
 Among the green leaves as they shake
 Far down within some shadowy lake,
 To me a painted paroquet
 Hath been — a most familiar bird —
 Taught me my alphabet to say —
 To lisp my very earliest word,
 While in the wild wood I did lie,
 A child — with a most knowing eye. 10

50 Of late, eternal Condor years
 So shake the very Heaven on high
 With tumult as they thunder by,
 I have no time for idle cares
 Through gazing on the unquiet sky.
 And when an hour with calmer wings
 Its down upon my spirit flings —
 That little time with lyre and rhyme
 To while away — forbidden things!
 My heart would feel to be a crime 20
 Unless it trembled with the strings.
 [1845]³

DREAM-LAND

107 By a route obscure and lonely,
 Haunted by ill angels only,
 Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,
 On a black throne reigns upright,
 I have reached these lands but newly
 From an ultimate dim Thule —
 From a wild weird clime that lieth, sublime,
 Out of SPACE — out of TIME.

Bottomless vales and boundless floods,
 And chasms, and caves, and Titan woods,
 With forms that no man can discover 11
 For the tears that drip all over;
 Mountains toppling evermore
 Into seas without a shore;
 Seas that restlessly aspire,
 Surging, unto skies of fire;

Lakes that endlessly outspread
 Their lone waters — lone and dead, —
 Their still waters — still and chilly
 With the snows of the lolling lily. 20

By the lakes that thus outspread
 Their lone waters, lone and dead, —
 Their sad waters, sad and chilly
 With the snows of the lolling lily,
 By the mountains — near the river
 Murmuring lowly, murmuring ever, —
 By the grey woods, — by the swamp 108
 Where the toad and the newt encamp, —
 By the dismal tarns and pools
 Where dwell the Ghouls, — 30
 By each spot the most unholy —
 In each nook most melancholy, —
 There the traveller meets, aghast,
 Sheeted Memories of the Past —
 Shrouded forms that start and sigh
 As they pass the wanderer by —
 White-robed forms of friends long given,
 In agony, to the Earth — and Heaven.

For the heart whose woes are legion 40
 'T is a peaceful, soothing region —
 For the spirit that walks in shadow
 'T is — oh 't is an Eldorado!
 But the traveller, travelling through it,
 May not — dare not openly view it;
 Never its mysteries are exposed
 To the weak human eye unclosed;
 So wills its King, who hath forbid
 The uplifting of the fringed lid;
 And thus the sad Soul that here passes
 Beholds it but through darkened glasses. 50

By a route obscure and lonely,
 Haunted by ill angels only,
 Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,
 On a black throne reigns upright, 109
 I have wandered home but newly
 From this ultimate dim Thule.
 [1844/1845]⁴

³ The original (1829) version differs from the final (1845) version in the following lines:

Line 12: For *Heaven* read *air*.

Line 14: Read *I hardly have had time for cares*.

Line 21: For *Unless it trembled* read *Did it not tremble*.

⁴ Where two dates follow a poem, the first is the date of publication of the earliest version; the second, the date of publication of the version given.

THE RAVEN

109 Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore —
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
“Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “tapping at my chamber door —
 Only this and nothing more.”

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December;
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow; — vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow — sorrow for the lost Lenore — 10
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore —
Nameless *here* for evermore.

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me – filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating,
“’Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door –
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door; –
This it is and nothing more.”

110 Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
 "Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore; 20
 But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
 And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
 That I scarce was sure I heard you" — here I opened wide the door; —
 Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore?"
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word "Lenore!"
Merely this and nothing more. 30

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.
“Surely,” said I, “surely that is something at my window lattice;
Let me see, then, what thence comes, and this mystery explore —
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore; —
‘Tis the wind and nothing more!”

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore;
111 Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door — 40
Perched upon a bust of Pallas, just above my chamber door —
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,

"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven,
 Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore —
 Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!"
 Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
 Though its answer little meaning — little relevancy bore; 50
 For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
 Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door —
 Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
 With such name as "Nevermore."

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only
 That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
 Nothing farther then he uttered — not a feather then he fluttered —
 Till I scarcely more than muttered "Other friends have flown before —
 On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my Hopes have flown before."
 Then the bird said "Nevermore." 60

112 Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
 "Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and store
 Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster
 Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore —
 Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore
 Of 'Never — nevermore.'"

But the Raven still beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
 Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird and bust and door;
 Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
 Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore — 70
 What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore
 Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing
 To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core;
 This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining
 On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o'er,
 But whose velvet-violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o'er,
 She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer
 Swung by Seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor. 80
 "Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee — by these angels he hath
 sent thee
 Respite — respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore;
 Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore!"
 Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil! — prophet still, if bird or devil! —
 Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,