

## “The Raven” Edgar Allan Poe

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—  
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels named 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,”

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,  
“Sir,” said I, “or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;  
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 darkness 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.

## “The Raven, Sort of”

One night while tired and thinking about  
An old and interesting book of old stories  
And while I nearly fell asleep I heard a tapping,  
Like someone gently tapping at my room door.  
5 “It is a visitor,” I said, “knocking at my door.  
Just that, and nothing more.”

I remember clearly, it was a dreary December,  
And each ember from the fire cast a ghost-like shadow on the floor.  
Eagerly I wished for tomorrow; Fruitlessly, I sought to borrow  
10 from the book an end to my sorrow for my love that I have lost—Lenore  
She was one of a kind and radiant and the angels called her Lenore—  
She is gone from earth evermore.

And the rustling of each purple curtain  
thrilled me with imaginary terrors never felt before;  
15 So that now, scared, I repeated,  
“It is a visitor begging to come inside—  
A late night visitor begging entrance.  
That’s all it was and nothing more.”

Now my resolve grew stronger; hesitating no longer,  
20 “Sir,” I said, “or madam, I beg your forgiveness;  
But the fact is, I was sleeping when you starting knocking,  
And so quietly knocking at my door,  
That I barely heard you.” I opened the door—  
Only darkness was there, and nothing more.

I stood for a while staring at the darkness, wondering and scared,  
I was doubting myself and dreaming of terrible things,  
But it was still silent and dark which gave no hint of what was happening,  
And the only word quietly spoken was “Lenore!”  
I whispered this, at it echoed back, “Lenore!”  
30 Only this, and nothing more.

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 thereat is, 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.  
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—  
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 marveled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,  
Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;  
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being  
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door—  
Bird or beast above 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 further then he uttered—not a feather then he fluttered—  
Till I scarcely more than muttered "Other friends have flown before —  
On the morrow will he leave me, as my hopes have flown before."  
Then the bird said, "Nevermore."

I turned back into the room a little unnerved and scared,  
Then I heard again a tapping a little louder than before.  
"Surely," said I, "surely there is something at the window pane;  
Let me see what there is and solve this mystery.—  
35 Let me calm down a moment and solve this mystery;  
It is the wind and nothing more!"

I flung open the window shutter with much commotion,  
Then in came a majestic raven of the distant past;  
He didn't pay me any respect or even pause;  
40 But, with the manner of a royal person, landed above my bedroom door—  
Landed on a statue of Athena, the goddess of wisdom, above my door—  
Sat there, and nothing more.

Then this black bird convinced me to change sadness into a smile,  
By the grave and serious look on his face,  
45 "Though the feathers on your head are cut," I said, "You are no coward,  
Sadly serious and ancient raven wandering from the underworld shore—  
Tell me what your name is in the underworld."  
Then he answered, "Nevermore,"

I marveled at this awkward looking bird to hear him speak so clearly,  
50 Though I little understood his meaning—It made no sense,  
For we agree that no living human  
has ever been lucky enough to see a bird above his door—  
a bird sitting on the statue above the door  
With a name like, "Nevermore."

55 But the raven, sitting lonely on the peaceful statue, spoke only,  
That one word, as if his whole soul came out in that one word.  
Nothing further did he say, nor did he even move—  
Until I quietly said, "like other birds before—  
tomorrow he will fly away, like my hopes that have disappeared."  
60 Then he said, "Nevermore."

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 all my sad soul 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—  
What this grim, ungainly, 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.  
“Wretch,” I cried, “thy God hath lent thee—by these angels he has 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,  
Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—  
On this home by horror haunted - tell me truly, I implore—  
Is there - is there balm in Gilead? —tell me—tell me, I implore!”  
Quoth the raven, “Nevermore.”

Scared and alarmed at the stillness broken by his clever reply,  
“Doubtless,” I said, “The word it says is the only word it knows  
Learned from some unhappy owner whose unrelenting bad luck  
That happened again and again until it repeated in a single word—  
65 Until the funeral song of his hope was revealed in one sad word  
Of ‘Never—nevermore.’”

But the Raven still charming me into smiling,  
I pulled up a cushioned chair in front of the bird, statue and door;  
then upon the fabric I sat, and I started connecting  
70 Idea to idea, thinking what this sinister bird of days gone by—  
What this grim, awkward and sinister bird of past  
Meant in saying “Nevermore.”

In this thought I sat guessing, but no sound did he make  
This bird whose fiery eyes were burned in by heart;  
75 This and much more I thought about, with my head resting  
on the cushion of the chair with the light hanging over me,  
But on the soft purple chair with the light above,  
*She* will rest her head nevermore!

Then I thought the air was filled with the scent from invisible incense,  
80 Swung by angels whose feet barely touched the floor.  
“Wretch,” I cried, “My God has lent me, by these angels he has sent me  
Relief, relief and forgetfulness from my memories of Lenore!  
Drink, drink this drug to forget my lost Lenore!”  
Said the raven, “Nevermore.”

85 “Wise one,” said I, “thing of evil! but still wise, be it a bird or devil! —  
Whether the devil sent, or whether a storm tossed you here,  
Alone yet determined, on this lonely place where I am held in a spell—  
In this house haunted by my loss—tell me the truth, I beg you—  
Is there a cure for my deep depression? Tell me, tell me, I beg you!”  
90 Said the Raven, Nevermore.”

“Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil! - prophet still, if bird or devil!  
By that Heaven that bends above us - by that God we both adore—  
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,  
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels named Lenore—  
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden, whom the angels named Lenore?”  
Quoth the raven, “Nevermore.”

“Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!” I shrieked upstarting—  
“Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian shore!  
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!  
Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust above my door!  
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!”  
Quoth the raven, “Nevermore.”

And the raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting  
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;  
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,  
And the lamp-light o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;  
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor  
Shall be lifted—nevermore!

“Wise one,” said I, “thing of evil! but still wise, be it a bird or devil!  
By Heaven above us and God that we both like—  
Tell me, as I am full of sorrow, if, in paradise,  
My lost love resides whose name is Lenore—  
95 Does paradise hold my rare and radiant lady named Lenore?  
Said the Raven, “Nevermore.”

“That word you only say is a sign that you should leave” I shouted—  
“Get back in the storm and back to the Underworld shore!  
Leave no black feathers behind as a sign of the lie that you have spoken!  
10 Leave me to my loneliness!—fly off the statue above my door!  
0 Take your beak out of my heart, and fly away from my door!”  
Said the Raven, “Nevermore.”

And the raven, not moving, still sitting, still sitting  
On the pale statue of Athena just above my door;  
And his eyes are that of a demon's that is dreaming,  
10 And the light over him casts his shadow on the floor;  
5 And my soul is lost in that shadow that lies on the floor  
Shall be lifted—nevermore!