

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 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.”

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 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.

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 marvelled 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 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.”

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 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—
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.
“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,
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.”

“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 name
Lenore—
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name
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!