**The Raven**

[First published in 1845]

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| horizontal space | 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 borrowFrom 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 curtainThrilled 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.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 beingEver 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 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 disasterFollowed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore -Till the dirges of his hope that melancholy burden boreOf "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 linkingFancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore -What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yoreMeant in croaking `Nevermore.'This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressingTo the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core;This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease recliningOn 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 censerSwung by Seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.`Wretch,' I cried, `thy God hath lent thee - by these angels he has sent theeRespite - 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 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 sittingOn 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 floorShall be lifted - nevermore! |