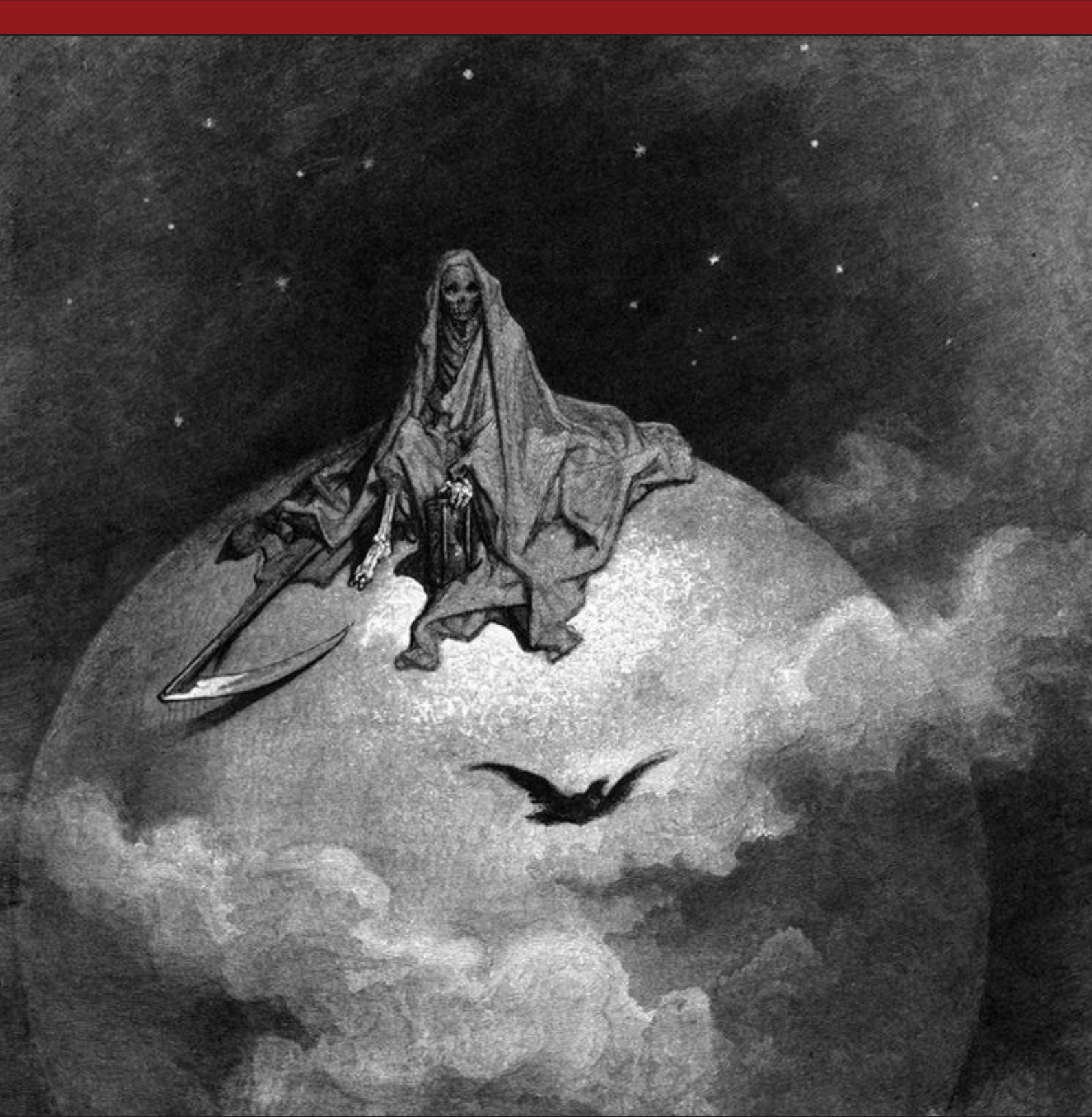


Edgar Allan Poe Poems

The Complete Collection





Edgar Allan Poe Poems



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		1840	Sonnet – Silence
		1843	Lenore The Conqueror Worm (from Ligeia) Eulalie – a Song
1829	Al Araaf part 1 Al Araaf part 2 Alone Elizabeth Fairy-Land Romance Sonnet – To Science To –	1844	Dream-Land
		1845	The Raven To F— (Broadway Journal version)
1831	Israfil The City in the Sea The Sleeper The Valley of Unrest To Helen	1846	A Valentine
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1833	Serenade The Coliseum	1848	An Enigma Eldorado To Helen [Whitman]
1835	Dreams Hymn Sancta Maria (from Morella) To F—S S. O—D	1849	A Dream within a Dream Annabel Lee For Annie The Bells To my Mother To One in Paradise (J. Lorimer Graham version)
1837	Bridal Ballad Sonnet – To Zante		

ABOUT THE PROJECT

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This edition does not include Poe's unpublished poems, unfinished poems, or poems that are generally accepted as being written by him, though published anonymously. We also decided not to include early versions of poems that he would later in life modify, often retitle and publish as a revised version, only the final versions are included here.

Daniel Serravalle de Sá
Project Coordinator

Al Araaf part I

1829

OH ! nothing earthly save the ray
(Thrown back from flowers) of Beauty's eye,
As in those gardens where the day
Springs from the gems of Circassy –
Oh! nothing earthly save the thrill 5
Of melody in woodland rill –
Or (music of the passion-hearted)
Joy's voice so peacefully departed
That, like the murmur in the shell,
Its echo dwelleth and will dwell – 10
Oh, nothing of the dross of ours –
Yet all the beauty – all the flowers,
That list our Love, and deck our bowers –
Adorn yon world afar, afar –
The wandering star. 15

'Twas a sweet time for Nesace – for there
Her world lay lolling on the golden air,
Near four bright suns – a temporary rest –
An oasis in desert of the blest.
Away – away – 'mid seas of rays that roll 20
Empyrean splendor o'er th' unchained soul –
The soul that scarce (the billows are so dense)
Can struggle to its destin'd eminence –
To distant spheres, from time to time, she rode,
And late to ours, the favor'd one of God – 25
But, now, the ruler of an anchor'd realm,
She throws aside the sceptre – leaves the helm,
And, amid incense and high spiritual hymns,
Laves in quadruple light her angel limbs.

Now happiest, loveliest in yon lovely Earth, 30
Whence sprang the "Idea of Beauty" into birth,
(Falling in wreaths thro' many a startled star,
Like woman's hair 'mid pearls, until, afar,
It lit on hills Achaian, and there dwelt)
She look'd into Infinity – and knelt. 35
Rich clouds, for canopies, about her curled –
Fit emblems of the model of her world –
Seen but in beauty – not impeding sight
Of other beauty glittering thro' the light –
A wreath that twined each starry form around, 40
And all the opal'd air in color bound.

All hurriedly she knelt upon a bed
Of flowers: of lilies such as rear'd the head
On the fair Capo Deucato, and sprang
So eagerly around about to hang 45

Upon the flying footsteps of – deep pride –
 Of her who lov'd a mortal – and so died.
 The Sephalica, budding with young bees,
 Uprear'd its purple stem around her knees:
 And gemmy flower, of Trebizond misnam'd – 50
 Inmate of highest stars, where erst it sham'd
 All other loveliness: its honied dew
 (The fabled nectar that the heathen knew)
 Deliriously sweet, was dropp'd from Heaven,
 And fell on gardens of the unforgiven 55
 In Trebizond – and on a sunny flower
 So like its own above that, to this hour,
 It still remaineth, torturing the bee
 With madness, and unwonted reverie:
 In Heaven, and all its environs, the leaf 60
 And blossom of the fairy plant, in grief
 Disconsolate linger – grief that hangs her head,
 Repenting follies that full long have fled,
 Heaving her white breast to the balmy air,
 Like guilty beauty, chasten'd, and more fair: 65
 Nyctanthes too, as sacred as the light
 She fears to perfume, perfuming the night:
 And Clytia pondering between many a sun,
 While pettish tears adown her petals run:
 And that aspiring flower that sprang on Earth – 70
 And died, ere scarce exalted into birth,
 Bursting its odorous heart in spirit to wing
 Its way to Heaven, from garden of a king:
 And Valisnerian lotus thither flown
 From struggling with the waters of the Rhone: 75
 And thy most lovely purple perfume, Zante!
 Isola d'oro! – Fior di Levante!
 And the Nelumbo bud that floats for ever
 With Indian Cupid down the holy river –
 Fair flowers, and fairy ! to whose care is given 80
 To bear the Goddess' song, in odors, up to Heaven:

“Spirit ! that dwellest where,
 In the deep sky,
 The terrible and fair,
 In beauty vie! 85
 Beyond the line of blue –
 The boundary of the star
 Which turneth at the view
 Of thy barrier and thy bar –
 Of the barrier overgone 90
 By the comets who were cast
 From their pride, and from their throne

To be drudges till the last –
To be carriers of fire
(The red fire of their heart) 95
With speed that may not tire
And with pain that shall not part –
Who livest – that we know –
In Eternity – we feel –
But the shadow of whose brow 100
What spirit shall reveal?
Tho' the beings whom thy Nesace,
Thy messenger hath known
Have dream'd for thy Infinity 105
A model of their own –
Thy will is done, Oh, God!
The star hath ridden high
Thro' many a tempest, but she rode
Beneath thy burning eye;
And here, in thought, to thee – 110
In thought that can alone
Ascend thy empire, and so be
A partner of thy throne –
By winged Fantasy,
My embassy is given, 115
Till secrecy shall knowledge be
In the environs of Heaven.”

She ceas'd – and buried then her burning cheek
Abash'd, amid the lilies there, to seek
A shelter from the fervor of His eye; 120
For the stars trembled at the Deity.
She stirr'd not – breath'd not – for a voice was there
How solemnly pervading the calm air!
A sound of silence on the startled ear
Which dreamy poets name “the music of the sphere.” 125
Ours is a world of words: Quiet we call
“Silence” – which is the merest word of all.
All Nature speaks, and ev'n ideal things
Flap shadowy sounds from visionary wings –
But ah! not so when, thus, in realms on high 130
The eternal voice of God is passing by,
And the red winds are withering in the sky!
”What tho' in worlds which sightless cycles run,
Link'd to a little system, and one sun –
Where all my love is folly and the crowd 135
Still think my terrors but the thunder cloud,
The storm, the earthquake, and the ocean-wrath –
(Ah! will they cross me in my angrier path?)

What tho' in worlds which own a single sun
The sands of Time grow dimmer as they run, 140
 Yet thine is my resplendency, so given
To bear my secrets thro' the upper Heaven.
Leave tenantless thy crystal home, and fly,
With all thy train, athwart the moony sky –
 Apart – like fire-flies in Sicilian night, 145
 And wing to other worlds another light!
 Divulge the secrets of thy embassy
To the proud orbs that twinkle – and so be
 To ev'ry heart a barrier and a ban
 Lest the stars totter in the guilt of man!" 150

Up rose the maiden in the yellow night,
The single-mooned eve! – on Earth we plight
Our faith to one love – and one moon adore –
The birth-place of young Beauty had no more.
As sprang that yellow star from downy hours 155
Up rose the maiden from her shrine of flowers,
And bent o'er sheeny mountain and dim plain
Her way – but left not yet her Therasæan reign.

Al Araaf part II

1829

High on a mountain of enamell'd head –
Such as the drowsy shepherd on his bed
Of giant pasturage lying at his ease,
Raising his heavy eyelid, starts and sees
With many a mutter'd "hope to be forgiven" 5
What time the moon is quadrated in Heaven –
Of rosy head, that towering far away
Into the sunlit ether, caught the ray
Of sunken suns at eve – at noon of night,
While the moon danc'd with the fair stranger light – 10
Uprear'd upon such height arose a pile
Of gorgeous columns on th' unburthen'd air,
Flashing from Parian marble that twin smile
Far down upon the wave that sparkled there,
And nursled the young mountain in its lair. 15

Of molten stars their pavement, such as fall
Thro' the ebon air, besilvering the pall
Of their own dissolution, while they die –
Adorning then the dwellings of the sky.
A dome, by linked light from Heaven let down, 20
Sat gently on these columns as a crown –
A window of one circular diamond, there,
Look'd out above into the purple air,
And rays from God shot down that meteor chain
And hallow'd all the beauty twice again, 25
Save when, between th' Empyrean and that ring,
Some eager spirit flapp'd his dusky wing.
But on the pillars Seraph eyes have seen
The dimness of this world: that greyish green
That Nature loves the best for Beauty's grave 30
Lurk'd in each cornice, round each architrave –
And every sculptur'd cherub thereabout
That from his marble dwelling peer'd out
Seem'd earthly in the shadow of his niche –
Achaian statues in a world so rich ? 35
Friezes from Tadmor and Persepolis –
From Balbec, and the stilly, clear abyss
Of beautiful Gomorrah! Oh, the wave
Is now upon thee – but too late to save!

Sound loves to revel in a summer night : 40
Witness the murmur of the grey twilight
That stole upon the ear, in Eyraco,
Of many a wild star-gazer long ago –
That stealeth ever on the ear of him
Who, musing, gazeth on the distance dim. 45

And sees the darkness coming as a cloud – 50
Is not its form – its voice – most palpable and loud?
But what is this? – it cometh – and it brings
A music with it – ‘tis the rush of wings –
A pause – and then a sweeping, falling strain
And Nesace is in her halls again. 55
From the wild energy of wanton haste
Her cheeks were flushing, and her lips apart;
And zone that clung around her gentle waist
Had burst beneath the heaving of her heart.
Within the centre of that hall to breathe 60
She paus’d and panted, Zanthé! all beneath,
The fairy light that kiss’d her golden hair
And long’d to rest, yet could but sparkle there!
Young flowers were whispering in melody
To happy flowers that night – and tree to tree; 65
Fountains were gushing music as they fell
In many a star-lit grove, or moon-lit dell;
Yet silence came upon material things –
Fair flowers, bright waterfalls and angel wings –
And sound alone that from the spirit sprang 70
Bore burthen to the charm the maiden sang:

“Neath blue-bell or streamer –
Or tufted wild spray
That keeps, from the dreamer,
The moonbeam away – 75
Bright beings! that ponder,
With half closing eyes,
On the stars which your wonder
Hath drawn from the skies,
Till they glance thro’ the shade, and 80
Come down to your brow
Like – eyes of the maiden
Who calls on you now –
Arise! from your dreaming
In violet bowers, 85
To duty beseeming
These star-litten hours –
And shake from your tresses
Encumber’d with dew
The breath of those kisses 95
That cumber them too –
(Oh! how, without you, Love!
Could angels be blest?)
Those kisses of true love
That lull’d ye to rest! 100

Up! – shake from your wing
 Each hindering thing:
 The dew of the night –
 It would weigh down your flight;
 And true love caresses – 105
 Oh! leave them apart!
 They are light on the tresses,
 But lead on the heart.

“Ligeia! Ligeia!
 My beautiful one! 110
 Whose harshest idea
 Will to melody run,
 Oh! is it thy will
 On the breezes to toss?
 Or, capriciously still, 115
 Like the lone Albatross,
 Incumbent on night
 (As she on the air)
 To keep watch with delight
 On the harmony there ? 120
 “Ligeia! wherever
 Thy image may be,
 No magic shall sever
 Thy music from thee.
 Thou hast bound many eyes 125
 In a dreamy sleep –
 But the strains still arise
 Which thy vigilance keep –
 The sound of the rain
 Which leaps down to the flower, 130
 And dances again
 In the rhythm of the shower –
 The murmur that springs
 From the growing of grass
 Are the music of things – 135
 But are modell’d, alas! –
 Away, then my dearest,
 Oh! hie thee away
 To springs that lie clearest
 Beneath the moon-ray – 140
 To lone lake that smiles,
 In its dream of deep rest,
 At the many star-isles
 That enjewel its breast –
 Where wild flowers, creeping, 145
 Have mingled their shade,
 On its margin is sleeping

Full many a maid –
 Some have left the cool glade, and
 Have slept with the bee – 150
 Arouse them my maiden,
 On moorland and lea –
 Go! breathe on their slumber,
 All softly in ear,
 The musical number 155
 They slumber'd to hear –
 For what can awaken
 An angel so soon
 Whose sleep hath been taken
 Beneath the cold moon, 160
 As the spell which no slumber
 Of witchery may test,
 The rythmical number
 Which lull'd him to rest?"

Spirits in wing, and angels to the view, 165
 A thousand seraphs burst th' Empyrean thro',
 Young dreams still hovering on their drowsy flight –
 Seraphs in all but "Knowledge," the keen light
 That fell, refracted, thro' thy bounds, afar
 O Death! from eye of God upon that star: 170
 Sweet was that error – sweeter still that death –
 Sweet was that error – ev'n with us the breath
 Of science dims the mirror of our joy –
 To them 'twere the Simoom, and would destroy –
 For what (to them) availeth it to know 175
 That Truth is Falsehood – or that Bliss is Woe?
 Sweet was their death – with them to die was rife
 With the last ecstasy of satiate life –
 Beyond that death no immortality –
 But sleep that pondereth is not "to be" – 180
 And there – oh! may my weary spirit dwell –
 Apart from Heaven's Eternity – and yet how far from Hell!
 What guilty spirit, in what shrubbery dim,
 Heard not the stirring summons of that hymn?
 But two: they fell: for Heaven no grace imparts 185
 To those who hear not for their beating hearts.
 A maiden-angel and her seraph-lover –
 Oh! where (and ye may seek the wide skies over)
 Was Love, the blind, near sober Duty known?
 Unguided Love hath fallen – 'mid "tears of perfect moan." 190
 He was a goodly spirit – he who fell:
 A wanderer by mossy-mantled well –
 A gazer on the lights that shine above –
 A dreamer in the moonbeam by his love:

What wonder? For each star is eye-like there, 195
 And looks so sweetly down on Beauty's hair –
 And they, and ev'ry mossy spring were holy
 To his love-haunted heart and melancholy.
 The night had found (to him a night of woe)
 Upon a mountain crag, young Angelo – 200
 Beetling it bends athwart the solemn sky,
 And scowls on starry worlds that down beneath it lie.
 Here sate he with his love – his dark eye bent
 With eagle gaze along the firmament:
 Now turn'd it upon her – but ever then 205
 It trembled to the orb of EARTH again.

“Iante, dearest, see! how dim that ray!
 How lovely 'tis to look so far away!
 She seem'd not thus upon that autumn eve
 I left her gorgeous halls – nor mourn'd to leave. 210
 That eve – that eve – I should remember well –
 The sun-ray dropp'd, in Lemnos, with a spell
 On th'Arabesque carving of a gilded hall
 Wherein I sate, and on the draperied wall –
 And on my eye-lids – O the heavy light! 215
 How drowsily it weigh'd them into night!
 On flowers, before, and mist, and love they ran
 With Persian Saadi in his Gulistan:
 But O that light! – I slumber'd – Death, the while,
 Stole o'er my senses in that lovely isle 220
 So softly that no single silken hair
 Awoke that slept – or knew that it was there.

The last spot of Earth's orb I trod upon
 Was a proud temple call'd the Parthenon –
 More beauty clung around her column'd wall 225
 Than ev'n thy glowing bosom beats withal,
 And when old Time my wing did disenthral
 Thence sprang I – as the eagle from his tower,
 And years I left behind me in an hour.
 What time upon her airy bounds I hung 230
 One half the garden of her globe was flung
 Unrolling as a chart unto my view –
 Tenantless cities of the desert too!
 Ianthe, beauty crowded on me then,
 And half I wish'd to be again of men.” 235

“My Angelo! and why of them to be?
 A brighter dwelling-place is here for thee –
 And greener fields than in yon world above,
 And women's loveliness – and passionate love.”

“But, list, Ianthe! when the air so soft 240
Fail'd, as my pennon'd spirit leapt aloft,
Perhaps my brain grew dizzy – but the world
I left so late was into chaos hurl'd –
Sprang from her station, on the winds apart,
And roll'd, a flame, the fiery Heaven athwart. 245
Methought, my sweet one, then I ceased to soar
And fell – not swiftly as I rose before,
But with a downward, tremulous motion thro'
Light, brazen rays, this golden star unto!
Nor long the measure of my falling hours, 250
For nearest of all stars was thine to ours –
Dread star! that came, amid a night of mirth,
A red Dædalion on the timid Earth.

“We came – and to thy Earth – but not to us
Be given our lady's bidding to discuss: 255
We came, my love; around, above, below,
Gay fire-fly of the night we come and go,
Nor ask a reason save the angel-nod
She grants to us, as granted by her God –
But, Angelo, than thine gray Time unfurl'd 260
Never his fairy wing o'er fairier world!
Dim was its little disk, and angel eyes
Alone could see the phantom in the skies,
When first Al Aaraaf knew her course to be
Headlong thitherward o'er the starry sea – 265
But when its glory swell'd upon the sky,
As glowing Beauty's bust beneath man's eye,
We paus'd before the heritage of men,
And thy star trembled – as doth Beauty then!”
Thus, in discourse, the lovers whiled away 270
The night that waned and waned and brought no day.
They fell: for Heaven to them no hope imparts
Who hear not for the beating of their hearts.

Alone

1829

From childhood's hour I have not been
As others were; I have not seen
As others saw; I could not bring
My passions from a common spring.
From the same source I have not taken 5
My sorrow; I could not awaken
My heart to joy at the same tone;
And all I loved, I loved alone.
Then – in my childhood, in the dawn 10
Of a most stormy life – was drawn
From every depth of good and ill
The mystery which binds me still:
From the torrent, or the fountain,
From the red cliff of the mountain,
From the sun that round me rolled 15
In its autumn tint of gold,
From the lightning in the sky
As it passed me flying by,
From the thunder and the storm,
And the cloud that took the form 20
(When the rest of Heaven was blue)
Of a demon in my view.

Annabel Lee

1849

It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of Annabel Lee;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought 5
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and she was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea;
But we loved with a love that was more than love –
I and my Annabel Lee; 10
With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling 15
My beautiful Annabel Lee;
So that her highborn kinsman came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
In this kingdom by the sea. 20

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
Went envying her and me –
Yes! – that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night, 25
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
Of those who were older than we –
Of many far wiser than we –
And neither the angels in heaven above, 30
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.

For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee; 35
And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling – my darling – my life and my bride,
In the sepulchre there by the sea, 40
In her tomb by the sounding sea

Leaping higher, higher, higher, 50
 With a desperate desire,
 And a resolute endeavor
 Now – now to sit or never,
 By the side of the pale-faced moon.
 Oh, the bells, bells, bells! 55
 What a tale their terror tells
 Of Despair!
 How they clang, and clash, and roar!
 What a horror they outpour
 On the bosom of the palpitating air! 60
 Yet the ear, it fully knows,
 By the twanging,
 And the clanging,
 How the danger ebbs and flows ;
 Yet, the ear distinctly tells, 65
 In the jangling,
 And the wrangling,
 How the danger sinks and swells,
 By the sinking or the swelling in the anger of the bells –
 Of the bells – 70
 Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
 Bells, bells, bells –
 In the clamor and the clangor of the bells!

 Hear the tolling of the bells –
 Iron bells! 75
 What a world of solemn thought their monody compels!
 In the silence of the night,
 How we shiver with affright
 At the melancholy meaning of their tone!
 For every sound that floats 80
 From the rust within their throats
 Is a groan.
 And the people – ah, the people –
 They that dwell up in the steeple,
 All alone, 85
 And who, tolling, tolling, tolling,
 In that muffled monotone,
 Feel a glory in so rolling
 On the human heart a stone –
 They are neither man nor woman – 90
 They are neither brute nor human –
 They are Ghouls:
 And their king it is who tolls;
 And he rolls, rolls, rolls, rolls,
 Rolls 95

A pæan from the bells! 100
And his merry bosom swells
With the pæan of the bells!
And he dances, and he yells;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme, 105
To the pæan of the bells –
Of the bells:
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the throbbing of the bells – 110
Of the bells, bells, bells –
To the sobbing of the bells ;
Keeping time, time, time,
As he knells, knells, knells,
In a happy Runic rhyme, 115
To the rolling of the bells –
Of the bells, bells, bells –
To the tolling of the bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells –
Bells, bells, bells – 120
To the moaning and the groaning of the bells.

Bridal Ballad

1837

The ring is on my hand,
And the wreath is on my brow;
Satin and jewels grand
Are all at my command,
And I am happy now. 5

And my lord he loves me well;
But, when first he breathed his vow,
I felt my bosom swell –
For the words rang as a knell,
And the voice seemed his who fell 10
In the battle down the dell,
And who is happy now.

But he spoke to reassure me,
And he kissed my pallid brow,
While a reverie came o'er me, 15
And to the church-yard bore me,
And I sighed to him before me,
Thinking him dead D'Elormie,
“Oh, I am happy now!”

And thus the words were spoken, 20
And this the plighted vow,
And, though my faith be broken,
And, though my heart be broken,
Behold the golden token
That proves me happy now! 25

Would God I could awaken!
For I dream I know not how!
And my soul is sorely shaken
Lest an evil step be taken, –
Lest the dead who is forsaken 30
May not be happy now.

The City in the Sea

1831

Lo! Death has reared himself a throne
In a strange city lying alone
Far down within the dim West,
Where the good and the bad and the worst and the best
Have gone to their eternal rest. 5
There shrines and palaces and towers
(Time-eaten towers that tremble not!)
Resemble nothing that is ours.
Around, by lifting winds forgot,
Resignedly beneath the sky 10
The melancholy waters lie.

No rays from the holy heaven come down
On the long night-time of that town;
But light from out the lurid sea
Streams up the turrets silently – 15
Gleams up the pinnacles far and free –
Up domes – up spires – up kingly halls –
Up fanes – up Babylon-like walls –
Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers
Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers – 20
Up many and many a marvellous shrine
Whose wreathed friezes intertwine
The viol, the violet, and the vine.
Resignedly beneath the sky 25
The melancholy waters lie.
So blend the turrets and shadows there
That all seem pendulous in air,
While from a proud tower in the town
Death looks gigantically down.

There open fanes and gaping graves 30
Yawn level with the luminous waves;
But not the riches there that lie
In each idol's diamond eye –
Not the gaily-jewelled dead
Tempt the waters from their bed; 35
For no ripples curl, alas!
Along that wilderness of glass –
No swellings tell that winds may be
Upon some far-off happier sea –
No heavings hint that winds have been 40
On seas less hideously serene.

But lo, a stir is in the air!
The wave – there is a movement there!
As if the towers had thrust aside,
In slightly sinking, the dull tide – 45
As if their tops had feebly given
A void within the filmy Heaven.
The waves have now a redder glow –
The hours are breathing faint and low –
And when, amid no earthly moans, 50
Down, down that town shall settle hence,
Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,
Shall do it reverence.

The Coliseum

1833

Type of the antique Rome! Rich reliquary
Of lofty contemplation left to Time
By buried centuries of pomp and power!
At length – at length – after so many days
Of weary pilgrimage and burning thirst, 5
(Thirst for the springs of lore that in thee lie,)
I kneel, an altered and an humble man,
Amid thy shadows, and so drink within
My very soul thy grandeur, gloom, and glory!

Vastness! and Age! and Memories of Eld! 10
Silence! and Desolation! and dim Night!
I feel ye now – I feel ye in your strength –
O spells more sure than e'er Judaeen king
Taught in the gardens of Gethsemane!
O charms more potent than the rapt Chaldee 15
Ever drew down from out the quiet stars!

Here, where a hero fell, a column falls!
Here, where the mimic eagle glared in gold,
A midnight vigil holds the swarthy bat!
Here, where the dames of Rome their gilded hair 20
Waved to the wind, now wave the reed and thistle!
Here, where on golden throne the monarch lolled,
Glides, spectre-like, unto his marble home,
Lit by the wan light of the horned moon,
The swift and silent lizard of the stones! 25
But stay! these walls – these ivy-clad arcades –
These moldering plinths – these sad and blackened shafts--
These vague entablatures – this crumbling frieze –
These shattered cornices – this wreck – this ruin –
These stones – alas! these grey stones – are they all – 30
All of the famed, and the colossal left
By the corrosive Hours to Fate and me?

“Not all” – the Echoes answer me – “not all!
Prophetic sounds and loud, arise forever 35
From us, and from all Ruin, unto the wise,
As melody from Memnon to the Sun.
We rule the hearts of mightiest men – we rule
With a despotic sway all giant minds.
We are not impotent – we pallid stones.
Not all our power is gone – not all our fame – 40
Not all the magic of our high renown –
Not all the wonder that encircles us –
Not all the mysteries that in us lie –
Not all the memories that hang upon
And cling around about us as a garment, 45
Clothing us in a robe of more than glory.”

The Conqueror Worm

1843

Lo! 'tis a gala night
Within the lonesome latter years!
An angel throng, bewinged, bedight
In veils, and drowned in tears,
Sit in a theatre, to see
A play of hopes and fears,
While the orchestra breathes fitfully
The music of the spheres. 5

Mimes, in the form of God on high,
Mutter and mumble low, 10
And hither and thither fly –
Mere puppets they, who come and go
At bidding of vast formless things
That shift the scenery to and fro,
Flapping from out their Condor wings 15
Invisible Woe!

That motley drama – oh, be sure
It shall not be forgot!
With its Phantom chased for evermore,
By a crowd that seize it not, 20
Through a circle that ever returneth in
To the self-same spot,
And much of Madness, and more of Sin,
And Horror the soul of the plot.

But see, amid the mimic rout 25
A crawling shape intrude!
A blood-red thing that writhes from out
The scenic solitude!
It writhes! – it writhes! – with mortal pangs
The mimes become its food, 30
And seraphs sob at vermin fangs
In human gore imbued.

Out – out are the lights – out all!
And, over each quivering form,
The curtain, a funeral pall, 35
Comes down with the rush of a storm,
While the angels, all pallid and wan,
Uprising, unveiling, affirm
That the play is the tragedy, “Man,”
And its hero the Conqueror Worm. 40

A Dream

1827

In visions of the dark night
I have dreamed of joy departed;
But a waking dream of life and light
Hath left me broken-hearted.

Ah! what is not a dream by day
To him whose eyes are cast
On things around him, with a ray
Turned back upon the past?

That holy dream, that holy dream,
While all the world were chiding,
Hath cheered me as a lovely beam
A lonely spirit guiding.

What though that light, thro' storm and night,
So trembled from afar –
What could there be more purely bright
In Truth's day-star?

5

10

15

Dream-land

1844

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 5
From an ultimate dim Thule –
From a wild clime that lieth, sublime,
Out of SPACE – out of TIME.

Bottomless vales and boundless floods,
And chasms, and caves, and Titan woods, 10
With forms that no man can discover
For the tears that drip all over;
Mountains toppling evermore
Into seas without a shore;
Seas that restlessly aspire, 15
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 25
Murmuring lowly, murmuring ever, –
By the gray woods, – by the swamp
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 35
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
'Tis a peaceful, soothing region 40
For the spirit that walks in shadow
'Tis – oh, 'tis an Eldorado!

But the traveller, travelling through it,
May not – dare not openly view it!
Never its mysteries are exposed 45
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,
I have wandered home but newly 55
From this ultimate dim Thule.

Dreams

1835

Oh! that my young life were a lasting dream!
My spirit not awakening, till the beam
Of an Eternity should bring the morrow:
Yes! though that long dream were of hopeless sorrow,
‘Twere better than the dull reality 5
Of waking life to him whose heart must be,
And hath been still, upon the lovely earth,
A chaos of deep passion from his birth.

But should it be – that dream eternally
Continuing – as dreams have been to me 10
In my young boyhood – should it thus be given,
‘Twere folly still to hope for higher Heaven.
For I have revell’d, when the sun was bright
I’ the summer sky; in dreams of living light,
And loveliness – have left my very heart 15
In climes of mine imagining – apart
From mine own home, with beings that have been
Of mine own thought – what more could I have seen?

‘Twas once – and *only* once – and the wild hour
From my remembrance shall not pass – some power 20
Or spell had bound me – ‘twas the chilly wind
Came o’er me in the night, and left behind
Its image on my spirit, or the moon
Shone on my slumbers in her lofty noon
Too coldly – or the stars – howe’er it was 25
That dream was as that night wind – let it pass.

I have been happy – though in a dream
I have been happy – and I love the theme;
Dreams! in their vivid coloring of life
As in that fleeting, shadowy, misty strife 30
Of semblance with reality which brings
To the delirious eye more lovely things
Of Paradise and Love – and all our own!
Than young Hope in his sunniest hour hath known.

Eldorado

1848

GAILY bedight,
A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in shadow,
Had journeyed long,
Singing a song, 5
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old –
This knight so bold –
And o'er his heart a shadow
Fell as he found 10
No spot of ground
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
Failed him at length,
He met a pilgrim shadow – 15
“Shadow,” said he,
“Where can it be –
This land of Eldorado?”

“Over the Mountains
Of the Moon, 20
Down the Valley of the Shadow,
Ride, boldly ride,”
The shade replied, –
“If you seek for Eldorado!”

Elizabeth

1829

Elizabeth, it surely is most fit
[Logic and common usage so commanding]
In thy own book that first thy name be writ,
Zeno and other sages notwithstanding;
And I have other reasons for so doing 5
Besides my innate love of contradiction;
Each poet - if a poet - in pursuing
The muses thro' their bowers of Truth or Fiction,
Has studied very little of his part,
Read nothing, written less - in short's a fool 10
Endued with neither soul, nor sense, nor art,
Being ignorant of one important rule,
Employed in even the theses of the school-
Called - I forget the heathenish Greek name
[Called anything, its meaning is the same] 15
"Always write first things uppermost in the heart."

**Elizabeth Rebecca Herring, Poe's cousin - Ed.*

An Enigma

1848

“Seldom we find,” says Solomon Don Dunce,

“Half an idea in the profoundest sonnet.

Through all the flimsy things we see at once

As easily as through a Naples bonnet –

Trash of all trash! – how can a lady don it?

Yet heavier far than your Petrarchan stuff –

Owl-downy nonsense that the faintest puff

Twirls into trunk-paper the while you con it.”

And, veritably, Sol is right enough.

The general tuckermanities are arrant

Bubbles – ephemeral and so transparent –

But this is, now – you may depend upon it –

Stable, opaque, immortal – all by dint

Of the dear names that he concealed within ‘t.

5

10

Eulalie

1843

I dwelt alone
In a world of moan,
And my soul was a stagnant tide,
Till the fair and gentle Eulalie became my blushing bride –
Till the yellow-haired young Eulalie became my smiling bride. 5

Ah, less – less bright
The stars of the night
Than the eyes of the radiant girl!
And never a flake
That the vapor can make 10
With the moon-tints of purple and pearl,
Can vie with the modest Eulalie's most unregarded curl –
Can compare with the bright-eyed Eulalie's most humble and careless curl.

Now Doubt – now Pain
Come never again, 15
For her soul gives me sigh for sigh,
And all day long
Shines, bright and strong,
Astarté within the sky,
While ever to her dear Eulalie upturns her matron eye – 20
While ever to her young Eulalie upturns her violet eye.

Evening Star

1827

'Twas noontide of summer,
And mid-time of night;
And stars, in their orbits,
Shone pale, thro' the light
Of the brighter, cold moon, 5
'Mid planets her slaves,
Herself in the Heavens,
Her beam on the waves.

I gaz'd awhile
On her cold smile; 10
Too cold – too cold for me –
There pass'd, as a shroud,
A fleecy cloud,
And I turn'd away to thee,
Proud Evening Star, 15
In thy glory afar,
And dearer thy beam shall be;
For joy to my heart
Is the proud part
Thou bearest in Heav'n at night, 20
And more I admire
Thy distant fire,
Than that colder, lowly light.

Fairy-Land

1829

Dim vales – and shadowy floods –
And cloudy-looking woods,
Whose forms we can't discover
For the tears that drip all over.
Huge moons there wax and wane – 5
 Again – again – again –
 Every moment of the night
 Forever changing places –
And they put out the star-light
With the breath from their pale faces. 10
 About twelve by the moon-dial,
 One more filmy than the rest
 (A kind which, upon trial,
 They have found to be the best)
Comes down – still down – and down, 15
 With its centre on the crown
 Of a mountain's eminence,
 While its wide circumference
 In easy drapery falls

 Over hamlets, over halls, 20
 Wherever they may be –
O'er the strange woods – o'er the sea –
 Over spirits on the wing –
 Over every drowsy thing –
 And buries them up quite 25
 In a labyrinth of light –
And then, how deep! – O, deep!
 Is the passion of their sleep.
 In the morning they arise,
 And their moony covering 30
 Is soaring in the skies,
With the tempests as they toss,
 Like – almost anything –
 Or a yellow Albatross.
They use that moon no more 35
For the same end as before –
 Videlicet, a tent
 Which I think extravagant:
 Its atomies, however,
 Into a shower dissever, 40
 Of which those butterflies
Of Earth, who seek the skies,
 And so come down again,
 (Never-contented things!)
 Have brought a specimen 45
 Upon their quivering wings.

For Annie

1849

Thank Heaven! the crisis –
The danger is past,
And the lingering illness
Is over at last –
And the fever called “Living” 5
Is conquered at last.

Sadly, I know
I am shorn of my strength,
And no muscle I move
As I lie at full length – 10
But no matter! – I feel
I am better at length.

And I rest so composedly,
Now, in my bed
That any beholder 15
Might fancy me dead –
Might start at beholding me,
Thinking me dead.

The moaning and groaning,
The sighing and sobbing, 20
Are quieted now,
With that horrible throbbing
At heart: – ah, that horrible,
Horrible throbbing!

The sickness – the nausea – 25
The pitiless pain –
Have ceased, with the fever
That maddened my brain –
With the fever called “Living”
That burned in my brain. 30

And oh! of all tortures
That torture the worst
Has abated – the terrible
Torture of thirst
For the naphthaline river 35
Of Passion accurst: –
I have drunk of a water
That quenches all thirst: –

Of a water that flows,
With a lullaby sound, 40
From a spring but a very few

Feet under ground –
From a cavern not very far
Down under ground.

And ah! let it never
Be foolishly said 45
That my room it is gloomy
And narrow my bed;
For man never slept
In a different bed – 50
And, to sleep, you must slumber
In just such a bed.

My tantalized spirit
Here blandly reposes,
Forgetting, or never 55
Regretting its roses –
Its old agitations
Of myrtles and roses:

For now, while so quietly
Lying, it fancies 60
A holier odor
About it, of pansies –
A rosemary odor,
Commingled with pansies –
With rue and the beautiful 65
Puritan pansies.

And so it lies happily,
Bathing in many
A dream of the truth
And the beauty of Annie – 70
Drowned in a bath
Of the tresses of Annie.

She tenderly kissed me,
She fondly caressed,
And then I fell gently 75
To sleep on her breast –
Deeply to sleep
From the heaven of her breast.

When the light was extinguished,
She covered me warm, 80
And she prayed to the angels
To keep me from harm –
To the queen of the angels
To shield me from harm.

And I lie so composedly, 85
Now, in my bed,
(Knowing her love)
That you fancy me dead –
And I rest so contentedly,
Now, in my bed, 90
(With her love at my breast)
That you fancy me dead –
That you shudder to look at me,
Thinking me dead.

But my heart it is brighter 95
Than all of the many
Stars in the sky,
For it sparkles with Annie
It glows with the light
Of the love of my Annie – 100
With the thought of the light
Of the eyes of my Annie.

The Happiest Day

1827

The happiest day – the happiest hour
My sear'd and blighted heart hath known,
The highest hope of pride and power,
I feel hath flown.

Of power! said I? yes! such I ween;
But they have vanish'd long, alas!
The visions of my youth have been –
But let them pass.

5

And, pride, what have I now with thee?
Another brow may even inherit
The venom thou hast pour'd on me
Be still, my spirit!

10

The happiest day – the happiest hour
Mine eyes shall see – have ever seen,
The brightest glance of pride and power,
I feel have been:

15

But were that hope of pride and power
Now offer'd with the pain
Even then I felt – that brightest hour
I would not live again:

20

For on its wing was dark alloy,
And, as it flutter'd – fell
An essence – powerful to destroy
A soul that knew it well.

The Haunted Palace

1839

IN the greenest of our valleys
By good angels tenanted,
Once a fair and stately palace –
Radiant palace – reared its head.
In the monarch Thought's dominion – 5
It stood there!
Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair!

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow, 10
(This – all this – was in the olden
Time long ago,
And every gentle air that dallied,
In that sweet day,
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid, 15
A wingéd odor went away.

Wanderers in that happy valley,
Through two luminous windows, saw
Spirits moving musically,
To a lute's well-tuned law, 20
Round about a throne where, sitting
(Porphyrogene!)
In state his glory well befitting,
The ruler of the realm was seen.

And all with pearl and ruby glowing 25
Was the fair palace door,
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing,
And sparkling evermore,
A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty
Was but to sing, 30
In voices of surpassing beauty,
The wit and wisdom of their king.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
Assailed the monarch's high estate.
(Ah, let us mourn! – for never morrow 35
Shall dawn upon him desolate!)
And round about his home the glory
That blushed and bloomed,
Is but a dim-remembered story
Of the old time entombed. 40

And travellers, now, within that valley,
Through the red-litten windows see
Vast forms, that move fantastically
 To a discordant melody,
 While, like a ghastly rapid river,
 Through the pale door
A hideous throng rush out forever
And laugh --- but smile no more.

45

Hymn

1835

AT morn – at noon – at twilight dim –
Maria! thou hast heard my hymn!
In joy and woe – in good and ill –
Mother of God, be with me still!
When the Hours flew brightly by, 5
And not a cloud obscured the sky,
My soul, lest it should truant be,
Thy grace did guide to thine and thee ;
Now, when storms of Fate o'ercast
Darkly my Present and my Past, 10
Let my Future radiant shine
With sweet hopes of thee and thine!

Hymn to Aristogeiton and Harmodius

Translation from the Greek

1827

Wreathed in myrtle, my sword I 'll conceal
Like those champions devoted and brave,
When they plunged in the tyrant their steel,
And to Athens deliverance gave.

Beloved heroes! your deathless souls roam
In the joy breathing isles of the blest;
Where the mighty of old have their home -
Where Achilles and Diomed rest.

In fresh myrtle my blade I 'll entwine,
Like Harmodious, the gallant and good,
When he made at the tutelar shrine
A libation of Tyranny's blood.

Ye deliverers of Athens from shame!
Ye avengers of Liberty's wrongs!
Endless ages shall cherish your fame
Embalmed in their echoing songs!

5

10

15

Imitation

1827

A dark unfathom'd tide
Of interminable pride –
A mystery, and a dream,
Should my early life seem;
I say that dream was fraught 5
With a wild, and waking thought
Of beings that have been,
Which my spirit hath not seen.
Had I let them pass me by,
With a dreaming eye! 10
Let none of earth inherit
That vision of my spirit;
Those thoughts I would control
As a spell upon his soul:
For that bright hope at last 15
And that light time have past,
And my worldly rest hath gone
With a sigh as it pass'd on
I care not tho' it perish
With a thought I then did cherish. 20

Israfel

1831

In Heaven a spirit doth dwell
“Whose heart-strings are a lute”;
None sing so wildly well
As the angel Israfel,
And the giddy stars (so legends tell),
Ceasing their hymns, attend the spell
Of his voice, all mute. 5

Tottering above
In her highest noon,
The enamored moon
Blushes with love,
While, to listen, the red levin
(With the rapid Pleiads, even,
Which were seven,)
Pauses in Heaven. 10 15

And they say (the starry choir
And the other listening things)
That Israfeli’s fire
Is owing to that lyre
By which he sits and sings –
The trembling living wire
Of those unusual strings. 20

But the skies that angel trod,
Where deep thoughts are a duty –
Where Love’s a grown-up God –
Where the Houri glances are
Imbued with all the beauty
Which we worship in a star. 25

Therefore thou art not wrong,
Israfeli, who despisest
An unimpassioned song;
To thee the laurels belong,
Best bard, because the wisest!
Merrily live, and long! 30

The ecstasies above
With thy burning measures suit –
Thy grief, thy joy, thy hate, thy love,
With the fervor of thy lute-
Well may the stars be mute! 35

If I could dwell
Where Israfel 40

Hath dwelt, and he where I,
He might not sing so wildly well
A mortal melody,
While a bolder note than this might swell
From my lyre within the sky.

45

The Lake – To –

1827

In spring of youth it was my lot
To haunt of the wide world a spot
The which I could not love the less –
So lovely was the loneliness
Of a wild lake, with black rock bound, 5
And the tall pines that towered around.

But when the Night had thrown her pall
Upon that spot, as upon all,
And the mystic wind went by
Murmuring in melody – 10
Then – ah then I would awake
To the terror of the lone lake.

Yet that terror was not fright,
But a tremulous delight –
A feeling not the jewelled mine 15
Could teach or bribe me to define –
Nor Love – although the Love were thine.

Death was in that poisonous wave,
And in its gulf a fitting grave
For him who thence could solace bring 20
To his lone imagining –
Whose solitary soul could make
An Eden of that dim lake.

Lenore

1843

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 nevermore!
See! on yon drear and rigid bier low lies thy love, Lenore!
Come! let the burial rite be read – the funeral song be sung! – 5
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 10
By you – by yours, the evil eye, – by yours, the slanderous tongue
That did to death the innocence that died, and died so young?”

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, 15
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, 20
“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 – 25
“From grief and groan, to a golden throne, beside the King of Heaven.”

The Raven

1845

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.”

5

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.

10

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.”

15

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.

20

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals 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.

25

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 thereat is, and this mystery explore –
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore; –
’Tis the wind and nothing more.”

35

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.

40

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, 45
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 blest 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 55
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

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 65
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 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 75
On the cushion’s velvet lining that the lamplight gloated o’er,
But whose velvet violet lining with the lamplight gloating o’er,
She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then methought the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer
Swung by Seraphim whose footfalls 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! – 85
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.” 90

“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.” 95
Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”

“Be that word our sign in 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!” 100
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, 105
And the lamplight 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!

Romance

1829

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 5
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

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. 15
And when an hour with calmer wings
Its down upon thy 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.

Sancta Maria (from Morella)

1835

Sancta Maria! turn thine eyes –
Upon the sinner's sacrifice,
Of fervent prayer and humble love,
From thy holy throne above.

At morn – at noon – at twilight dim – 5
Maria! thou hast heard my hymn!
In joy and wo – in good and ill –
Mother of God, be with me still!

When the Hours flew brightly by,
And not a cloud obscured the sky, 10
My soul, lest it should truant be,
Thy grace did guide to thine and thee;

Now, when storms of Fate o'ercast
Darkly my Present and my Past,
Let my Future radiant shine 15
With sweet hopes of thee and thine!

Serenade

1833

So sweet the hour – so calm the time,
I feel it more than half a crime
When Nature sleeps and stars are mute,
To mar the silence ev'n with lute.
At rest on ocean's brilliant dies 5
An image of Elysium lies:
Seven Pleiades entranced in Heaven,
Form in the deep another seven:
Endymion nodding from above
Sees in the sea a second love: 10
Within the valleys dim and brown,
And on the spectral mountain's crown
The wearied light is lying down:
The earth, and stars, and sea, and sky
Are redolent of sleep, as I 15
Am redolent of thee and thine
Enthralling love, my Adeline.
But list, O list! – so soft and low
Thy lover's voice to night shall flow
That, scarce awake, thy soul shall deem 20

My words the music of a dream.
Thus, while no single sound too rude,
Upon thy slumber shall intrude,
Our thoughts, our souls – O God above!
In every deed shall mingle, love. 25

Silence

1839

There are some qualities – some incorporate things,
That have a double life, which thus is made
A type of that twin entity which springs
From matter and light, evinced in solid and shade.
There is a two-fold Silence – sea and shore – 5
Body and soul. One dwells in lonely places,
Newly with grass o'ergrown; some solemn graces,
Some human memories and tearful lore,
Render him terrorless: his name's "No More."
He is the corporate Silence: dread him not! 10
No power hath he of evil in himself;
But should some urgent fate (untimely lot!)
Bring thee to meet his shadow (nameless elf,
That haunteth the lone regions where hath trod
No foot of man,) commend thyself to God! 15

The Sleeper

1831

AT midnight, in the month of June,
I stand beneath the mystic moon.
An opiate vapor, dewy, dim,
Exhales from out her golden rim,
And, softly dripping, drop by drop, 5
Upon the quiet mountain top,
Steals drowsily and musically
Into the universal valley.
The rosemary nods upon the grave;
The lily lolls upon the wave; 10
Wrapping the fog about its breast,
The ruin moulders into rest;
Looking like Lethe, see! the lake
A conscious slumber seems to take,
And would not, for the world, awake. 15
All Beauty sleeps! – and lo! where lies
(Her casement open to the skies)
Irene, with her Destinies!

Oh, lady bright! can it be right –
This window open to the night? 20
The wanton airs, from the tree-top,
Laughingly through the lattice drop –
The bodiless airs, a wizard rout,
Flit through thy chamber in and out,
And wave the curtain canopy 25
So fitfully – so fearfully –
Above the closed and fringed lid
'Neath which thy slumb'ring soul lies hid,
That o'er the floor and down the wall,
Like ghosts the shadows rise and fall! 30
Oh, lady dear, hast thou no fear?
Why and what art thou dreaming here?
Sure thou art come o'er far-off seas,
A wonder to these garden trees!
Strange is thy pallor! strange thy dress! 35
Strange, above all, thy length of tress,
And this all solemn silentness!

The lady sleeps! Oh, may her sleep,
Which is enduring, so be deep!
Heaven have her in its sacred keep! 40
This chamber changed for one more holy,
This bed for one more melancholy,
I pray to God that she may lie
Forever with unopened eye,
While the dim sheeted ghosts go by! 45

My love, she sleeps! Oh, may her sleep,
As it is lasting, so be deep!
Soft may the worms about her creep!
Far in the forest, dim and old,
For her may some tall vault unfold – 50
Some vault that oft hath flung its black
And winged pannels fluttering back,
Triumphant, o'er the crested palls,
Of her grand family funerals –
Some sepulchre, remote, alone, 55
Against whose portal she hath thrown,
In childhood, many an idle stone –
Some tomb from out whose sounding door
She ne'er shall force an echo more,
Thrilling to think, poor child of sin! 60
It was the dead who groaned within.

Song

1827

I saw thee on thy bridal day –
When a burning blush came o'er thee,
Though happiness around thee lay,
The world all love before thee:

And in thine eye a kindling light
(Whatever it might be)
Was all on Earth my aching sight
Of Loveliness could see.

5

That blush, perhaps, was maiden shame –
As such it well may pass –
Though its glow hath raised a fiercer flame
In the breast of him, alas!

10

Who saw thee on that bridal day,
When that deep blush would come o'er thee,
Though happiness around thee lay,
The world all love before thee.

15

Sonnet – To Science

1829

SCIENCE! true daughter of Old Time thou art!
Who alterest all things with thy peering eyes.
Why preyest thou thus upon the poet's heart,
Vulture, whose wings are dull realities?
How should he love thee? or how deem thee wise, 5
Who wouldst not leave him in his wandering
To seek for treasure in the jewelled skies
Albeit he soared with an undaunted wing?
Hast thou not dragged Diana from her car?
And driven the Hamadryad from the wood 10
To seek a shelter in some happier star?
Hast thou not torn the Naiad from her flood,
The Elfin from the green grass, and from me
The summer dream beneath the tamarind tree?

Spirits of the Dead

1827

Thy soul shall find itself alone
'Mid dark thoughts of the gray tombstone –
Not one, of all the crowd, to pry
Into thine hour of secrecy:

Be silent in that solitude 5
Which is not loneliness, for then
The spirits of the dead who stood
In life before thee are again
In death around thee – and their will
Shall then overshadow thee: be still. 10

The night – tho' clear – shall frown,
And the stars shall look not down,
From their high thrones in the Heaven,
With light like Hope to mortals given;
But their red orbs, without beam, 15
To thy weariness shall seem

As a burning and a fever
Which would cling to thee for ever:
Now are thoughts thou shalt not banish –
Now are visions ne'er to vanish – 20
From thy spirit shall they pass
No more – like dew-drop from the grass:

The breeze – the breath of God – is still,
And the mist upon the hill
Shadowy – shadowy – yet unbroken, 25
Is a symbol and a token –
How it hangs upon the trees,
A mystery of mysteries!

Stanzas

1827

*How often we forget all time, when lone
Admiring Nature's universal throne;
Her woods – her wilds – her mountains – the intense
Reply of HERS to OUR intelligence!
–BYRON, The Island.*

In youth have I known one with whom the Earth
In secret communing held – as he with it,
In daylight, and in beauty from his birth:
Whose fervid, flickering torch of life was lit
From the sun and stars, whence he had drawn forth 5
A passionate light – such for his spirit was fit –
And yet that spirit knew not, in the hour
Of its own fervor what had o'er it power.

Perhaps it may be that my mind is wrought
To a fever by the moonbeam that hangs o'er, 10
But I will half believe that wild light fraught
With more of sovereignty than ancient lore
Hath ever told – or is it of a thought
The unembodied essence, and no more,
That with a quickening spell doth o'er us pass 15
As dew of the night-time o'er the summer grass?

Doth o'er us pass, when, as th' expanding eye
To the loved object – so the tear to the lid
Will start, which lately slept in apathy?
And yet it need not be – (that object) hid 20
From us in life – but common – which doth lie
Each hour before us – but then only, bid
With a strange sound, as of a harp-string broken,
To awake us – 'Tis a symbol and a token

Of what in other worlds shall be – and given 25
In beauty by our God, to those alone
Who otherwise would fall from life and Heaven
Drawn by their heart's passion, and that tone,
That high tone of the spirit which hath striven,
Tho' not with Faith – with godliness – whose throne 30
With desperate energy 't hath beaten down;
Wearing its own deep feeling as a crown.

Tamerlane

1827

Kind solace in a dying hour!
Such, father, is not (now) my theme –
I will not madly deem that power
Of Earth may shrive me of the sin
Unearthly pride hath revell'd in – 5
I have no time to dote or dream:
You call it hope – that fire of fire!
It is but agony of desire:
If I can hope – Oh God! I can –
Its fount is holier – more divine – 10
I would not call thee fool, old man,
But such is not a gift of thine.

Know thou the secret of a spirit
Bow'd from its wild pride into shame.
O! yearning heart! I did inherit 15
Thy withering portion with the fame,
The searing glory which hath shone
Amid the jewels of my throne,
Halo of Hell! and with a pain
Not Hell shall make me fear again – 20
O! craving heart, for the lost flowers
And sunshine of my summer hours!
The undying voice of that dead time,
With its interminable chime,
Rings, in the spirit of a spell, 25
Upon thy emptiness – a knell.

I have not always been as now:
The fever'd diadem on my brow
I claim'd and won usurpingly –
Hath not the same fierce heirdom given 30
Rome to the Caesar – this to me?
The heritage of a kingly mind,
And a proud spirit which hath striven
Triumphantly with human kind.

On mountain soil I first drew life: 35
The mists of the Taglay have shed
Nightly their dews upon my head,
And, I believe, the winged strife
And tumult of the headlong air
Have nestled in my very hair. 40

So late from Heaven – that dew – it fell
(Mid dreams of an unholy night)
Upon me with the touch of Hell,
While the red flashing of the light

From clouds that hung, like banners, o'er, 45
 Appeared to my half-closing eye
 The pageantry of monarchy,
And the deep trumpet-thunder's roar
 Came hurriedly upon me, telling
 Of human battle, where my voice, 50
My own voice, silly child! – was swelling
 (Oh! how my spirit would rejoice,
 And leap within me at the cry)
 The battle-cry of Victory!

The rain came down upon my head 55
 Unshelter'd – and the heavy wind
Rendered me mad and deaf and blind.
It was but man, I thought, who shed
 Laurels upon me: and the rush –
 The torrent of the chilly air 60
 Gurgled within my ear the crush
Of empires – with the captive's prayer –
 The hum of suiters – and the tone
Of flattery 'round a sovereign's throne.

My passions, from that hapless hour, 65
 Usurp'd a tyranny which men
Have deem'd, since I have reach'd to power;
 My innate nature – be it so:
 But, father, there liv'd one who, then,
Then – in my boyhood – when their fire 70
 Burn'd with a still intenser glow,
(For passion must, with youth, expire)
 E'en *then* who knew this iron heart
 In woman's weakness had a part.

I have no words – alas! – to tell 75
 The loveliness of loving well!
Nor would I now attempt to trace
 The more than beauty of a face
Whose lineaments, upon my mind,
Are – shadows on th' unstable wind: 80
 Thus I remember having dwelt
 Some page of early lore upon,
 With loitering eye, till I have felt
The letters – with their meaning – melt
 To fantasies – with none. 85

Oh, she was worthy of all love!
 Love – as in infancy was mine –
 'Twas such as angel minds above
Might envy; her young heart the shrine

On which my ev'ry hope and thought
Were incense – then a goodly gift,
For they were childish – and upright –
Pure – as her young example taught:
Why did I leave it, and, adrift,
Trust to the fire within, for light? 90

We grew in age – and love – together,
Roaming the forest, and the wild;
My breast her shield in wintry weather –
And, when the friendly sunshine smil'd,
And she would mark the opening skies, 95
I saw no Heaven – but in her eyes.

Young Love's first lesson is – the heart:
For 'mid that sunshine, and those smiles,
When, from our little cares apart,
And laughing at her girlish wiles, 100
I'd throw me on her throbbing breast,
And pour my spirit out in tears –
There was no need to speak the rest –
No need to quiet any fears
Of her – who ask'd no reason why, 105
But turn'd on me her quiet eye!

Yet *more* than worthy of the love
My spirit struggled with, and strove,
When, on the mountain peak, alone,
Ambition lent it a new tone – 110
I had no being – but in thee:
The world, and all it did contain
In the earth – the air – the sea –
Its joy – its little lot of pain
That was new pleasure – the ideal, 115
Dim, vanities of dreams by night –
And dimmer nothings which were real –
(Shadows – and a more shadowy light!)
Parted upon their misty wings,
And, so, confusedly, became 120
Thine image, and – a name – a name!
Two separate – yet most intimate things.

I was ambitious – have you known
The passion, father? You have not:
A cottager, I mark'd a throne 125
Of half the world as all my own,
And murmur'd at such lowly lot –
But, just like any other dream,
Upon the vapor of the dew
My own had past, did not the beam 130

Of beauty which did while it thro'
The minute – the hour – the day – oppress
My mind with double loveliness.

We walk'd together on the crown
Of a high mountain which look'd down 135
Afar from its proud natural towers
Of rock and forest, on the hills –
The dwindled hills! begirt with bowers
And shouting with a thousand rills.

I spoke to her of power and pride, 140
But mystically – in such guise
That she might deem it nought beside
The moment's converse; in her eyes
I read, perhaps too carelessly,
A mingled feeling with my own; 145
The flush on her bright cheek to me
Seem'd to become a queenly throne
Too well that I should let it be
Light in the wilderness alone.

I wrapp'd myself in grandeur then, 150
And donn'd a visionary crown –
Yet it was not that Fantasy
Had thrown her mantle over me,
But that, among the rabble – men –
Lion ambition is chain'd down, 155
And crouches to a keeper's hand;
Not so in deserts where the grand –
The wild – the terrible conspire
With their own breath to fan his fire.

Look 'round thee now on Samarcand! 160
Is not she queen of Earth? her pride
Above all cities? in her hand
Their destinies? in all beside
Of glory which the world hath known
Stands she not nobly and alone? 165
Falling – her veriest stepping-stone
Shall form the pedestal of a throne –
And who her sovereign? Timour – he
Whom the astonished people saw
Striding o'er empires haughtily 170
A diadem'd outlaw!

Oh! human love! thou spirit given,
On Earth, of all we hope in Heaven!
Which fall'st into the soul like rain
Upon the Siroc wither'd plain, 175

And failing in thy power to bless
But leav'st the heart a wilderness!
Idea! which bindest life around
With music of so strange a sound
And beauty of so wild a birth, – 180
Farewell! for I have won the Earth!

When Hope, the eagle that tower'd, could see
No cliff beyond him in the sky,
His pinions were bent droopingly,
And homeward turn'd his soften'd eye. 185
'Twas sunset: when the sun will part
There comes a sullenness of heart
To him who still would look upon
The glory of the summer sun.
That soul will hate the ev'ning mist, 190
So often lovely, and will list
To the sound of the coming darkness (known
To those whose spirits hearken) as one
Who, in a dream of night, *would* fly
But *cannot* from a danger nigh. 195

What tho' the moon – the white moon
Shed all the splendour of her noon,
Her smile is chilly – and her beam,
In that time of dreariness, will seem
(So like you gather in your breath) 200
A portrait taken after death.
And boyhood is a summer sun
Whose waning is the dreariest one –
For all we live to know is known,
And all we seek to keep hath flown – 205
Let life, then, as the day-flower, fall
With the noon-day beauty – which is all.

I reach'd my home – my home no more –
For all had flown who made it so –
I pass'd from out its mossy door, 210
And, tho' my tread was soft and low,
A voice came from the threshold stone
Of one whom I had earlier known –
Oh! I defy thee, Hell, to show
On beds of fire that burn below, 215
A humbler heart – a deeper woe.

Father, I firmly do believe –
I *know* – for Death, who comes for me
From regions of the blest afar,
Where there is nothing to deceive, 220
Hath left his iron gate ajar,

And rays of truth you cannot see
Are flashing thro' Eternity –
I do believe that Eblis hath
A snare in ev'ry human path – 225
Else how, when in the holy grove
I wandered of the idol, Love,
Who daily scents his snowy wings
With incense of burnt offerings
From the most unpolluted things, 230
Whose pleasant bowers are yet so riven
Above with trellis'd rays from Heaven
No mote may shun – no tiniest fly –
The light'ning of his eagle eye –
How was it that Ambition crept, 235
Unseen, amid the revels there,
Till growing bold, he laughed and leapt
In the tangles of Love's very hair?

Beloved! amid the earnest woes
That crowd around my earthly path –
 (Drear path, alas! where grows
 Not even one lonely rose) –
 My soul at least a solace hath
In dreams of thee, and therein knows
 An Eden of bland repose.

5

And thus thy memory is to me
Like some enchanted far-off isle
 In some tumultuous sea –
Some ocean throbbing far and free
With storms – but where meanwhile
 Serenest skies continually
Just o're that one bright island smile.

10

To F-S S. O-D

1835

Thou wouldst be loved? – then let thy heart
From its present pathway part not!
Being everything which now thou art,
Be nothing which thou art not.
So with the world thy gentle ways,
Thy grace, thy more than beauty,
Shall be an endless theme of praise,
And love – a simple duty.

5

To Helen

1831

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

5

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!

15

To Helen [Whitman]

1848

I saw thee once – once only – years ago:
I must not say how many – but not many.
It was a July midnight; and from out
A full-orbed moon, that, like thine own soul, soaring,
Sought a precipitate pathway up through heaven, 5
There fell a silvery-silken veil of light,
With quietude, and sultriness, and slumber,
Upon the upturned faces of a thousand
Roses that grew in an enchanted garden,
Where no wind dared to stir, unless on tiptoe – 10
Fell on the upturn'd faces of these roses
That gave out, in return for the love-light,
Their odorous souls in an ecstatic death –
Fell on the upturn'd faces of these roses
That smiled and died in this parterre, enchanted 15
By thee, and by the poetry of thy presence.

Clad all in white, upon a violet bank
I saw thee half reclining; while the moon
Fell on the upturn'd faces of the roses,
And on thine own, upturn'd – alas, in sorrow! 20
Was it not Fate, that, on this July midnight –
Was it not Fate, (whose name is also Sorrow,)
That bade me pause before that garden-gate,
To breathe the incense of those slumbering roses?
No footstep stirred: the hated world all slept, 25
Save only thee and me. (Oh, Heaven! – oh, God!
How my heart beats in coupling those two words!)
Save only thee and me. I paused – I looked –
And in an instant all things disappeared.
(Ah, bear in mind this garden was enchanted!) 30

The pearly lustre of the moon went out:
The mossy banks and the meandering paths,
The happy flowers and the repining trees,
Were seen no more: the very roses' odors
Died in the arms of the adoring airs. 35
All – all expired save thee – save less than thou:
Save only the divine light in thine eyes –
Save but the soul in thine uplifted eyes.
I saw but them – they were the world to me!
I saw but them – saw only them for hours, 40
Saw only them until the moon went down.
What wild heart-histories seemed to lie enwritten
Upon those crystalline, celestial spheres!
How dark a woe, yet how sublime a hope!
How silently serene a sea of pride! 45
How daring an ambition; yet how deep –
How fathomless a capacity for love!

But now, at length, dear Dian sank from sight,
Into a western couch of thunder-cloud;
And thou, a ghost, amid the entombing trees 50
Didst glide away. Only thine eyes remained;
They would not go – they never yet have gone;
Lighting my lonely pathway home that night,
They have not left me (as my hopes have) since;
They follow me – they lead me through the years. 55
They are my ministers – yet I their slave.
Their office is to illumine and enkindle –
My duty, to be saved by their bright light,
And purified in their electric fire,
And sanctified in their elysian fire. 60
They fill my soul with Beauty (which is Hope),
And are far up in Heaven – the stars I kneel to
In the sad, silent watches of my night;
While even in the meridian glare of day
I see them still – two sweetly scintillant 65
Venuses, unextinguished by the sun!

To M. L. S.

1847

Of all who hail thy presence as the morning –
Of all to whom thine absence is the night –
The blotting utterly from out high heaven
The sacred sun – of all who, weeping, bless thee
Hourly for hope – for life – ah! above all, 5
For the resurrection of deep-buried faith
In Truth – in Virtue – in Humanity –
Of all who, on Despair's unhallowed bed
Lying down to die, have suddenly arisen
At thy soft-murmured words, "Let there be light!" 10
At the soft-murmured words that were fulfilled
In the seraphic glancing of thine eyes –
Of all who owe thee most – whose gratitude
Nearest resembles worship – oh, remember
The truest – the most fervently devoted, 15
And think that these weak lines are written by him –
By him who, as he pens them, thrills to think
His spirit is communing with an angel's.

To Marie Louise

1847

Not long ago, the writer of these lines,
In the mad pride of intellectuality,
Maintained "the power of words" – denied that ever
A thought arose within the human brain
Beyond the utterance of the human tongue: 5
And now, as if in mockery of that boast,
Two words – two foreign soft disyllables –
Italian tones, made only to be murmured
By angels dreaming in the moonlit "dew
That hangs like chains of pearl on Hermon hill," – 10
Have stirred from out the abysses of his heart,
Unthought-like thoughts that are the souls of thought,
Richer, far wilder, far diviner visions
Than even the seraph harper, Israfil,
(Who has "the sweetest voice of all God's creatures,") 15
Could hope to utter. And I ! my spells are broken.
The pen falls powerless from my shivering hand.
With thy dear name as text, though bidden by thee,
I cannot write – I cannot speak or think –
Alas! I cannot feel; for 'tis not feeling, 20
This standing motionless upon the golden
Threshold of the wide-open gate of dreams,
Gazing, entranced, adown the gorgeous vista,
And thrilling as I see, upon the right,
Upon the left, and all the way along, 25
Amid unpurpled vapors, far away
To where the prospect terminates – *thee only*

To my Mother

1849

Because I feel that, in the Heavens above,
The angels, whispering to one another,
Can find, among their burning terms of love,
None so devotional as that of "Mother,"
Therefore by that dear name I long have called you – 5
You who are more than mother unto me,
And fill my heart of hearts, where Death installed you
In setting my Virginia's spirit free.
My mother – my own mother, who died early, 10
Was but the mother of myself; but you
Are mother to the one I loved so dearly,
And thus are dearer than the mother I knew
By that infinity with which my wife
Was dearer to my soul than its soul-life.

To One in Paradise (J. Lorimer Graham version)

1849

Thou wast all that to me, love,
For which my soul did pine –
A green isle in the sea, love,
A fountain and a shrine,
All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers, 5
And all the flowers were mine.

Ah, dream too bright to last!
Ah, starry Hope! that didst arise
But to be overcast!
A voice from out the Future cries, 10
"On! on!" – but o'er the Past
(Dim gulf!) my spirit hovering lies
Mute, motionless, aghast!

For, alas! alas! with me
The light of Life is o'er! 15
"No more – no more – no more –
(Such language holds the solemn sea
To the sands upon the shore)
Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree,
Or the stricken eagle soar! 20

And all my days are trances,
And all my nightly dreams
Are where thy dark eye glances,
And where thy footstep gleams –
In what ethereal dances, 25
By what eternal streams.

To The River

1827

Fair river! in thy bright, clear flow
Of crystal, wandering water,
Thou art an emblem of the glow
Of beauty – the unhidden heart –
The playful mazes of art
In old Alberto's daughter;

5

But when within thy wave she looks –
Which glistens then, and trembles –
Why, then, the prettiest of brooks
Her worshipper resembles;
For in his heart, as in thy stream,
Her image deeply lies –
His heart which trembles at the beam
Of her soul-searching eyes.

10

To Zante

1837

Fair isle, that from the fairest of all flowers,
Thy gentlest of all gentle names dost take!
How many memories of what radiant hours
At sight of thee and thine at once awake!
How many scenes of what departed bliss! 5
How many thoughts of what entombéd hopes!
How many visions of a maiden that is
No more – no more upon thy verdant slopes!
No more! alas, that magical sad sound
Transforming all! Thy charms shall please *no more!* 10
Thy memory *no more!* Accurséd ground
Henceforth I hold thy flower-enamelled shore,
O hyacinthine isle! O purple Zante!
"Isola d'oro! Fior di Levante!"

Ulalume

1847

The skies they were ashen and sober;
The leaves they were crisped and sere –
The leaves they were withering and sere;
It was night in the lonesome October
Of my most immemorial year; 5
It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,
In the misty mid region of Weir –
It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,
In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

Here once, through an alley Titanic, 10
Of cypress, I roamed with my Soul –
Of cypress, with Psyche, my Soul.
There were days when my heart was volcanic
As the scoriac rivers that roll –
As the lavas that restlessly roll 15
Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek
In the ultimate climes of the pole –
That groan as they roll down Mount Yaanek
In the realms of the boreal pole.

Our talk had been serious and sober, 20
But our thoughts they were palsied and sere –
Our memories were treacherous and sere –
For we knew not the month was October,
And we marked not the night of the year 25
(Ah, night of all nights in the year!) –
We noted not the dim lake of Auber
(Though once we had journeyed down here) –
Remembered not the dank tarn of Auber,
Nor the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir. 30

And now, as the night was senescent,
And star-dials pointed to morn –
As the star-dials hinted of morn –
At the end of our path a liquescent
And nebulous lustre was born, 35
Out of which a miraculous crescent
Arose with a duplicate horn –
Astarte's bediamonded crescent
Distinct with its duplicate horn.

And I said: "She is warmer than Dian: 40
She rolls through an ether of sighs –
She revels in a region of sighs:
She has seen that the tears are not dry on
These cheeks, where the worm never dies,
And has come past the stars of the Lion, 45

To point us the path to the skies –
To the Lethean peace of the skies –
Come up, in despite of the Lion,
To shine on us with her bright eyes –
Come up through the lair of the Lion, 50
With love in her luminous eyes."

But Psyche, uplifting her finger,
Said: "Sadly this star I mistrust –
Her pallor I strangely mistrust: –
Oh, hasten! – oh, let us not linger! 35
Oh, fly! – let us fly! – for we must."
In terror she spoke, letting sink her
Wings until they trailed in the dust –
In agony sobbed, letting sink her
Plumes till they trailed in the dust – 60
Till they sorrowfully trailed in the dust.

I replied: "This is nothing but dreaming:
Let us on by this tremulous light!
Let us bathe in this crystalline light!
Its Sybilic splendor is beaming 65
With Hope and in Beauty to-night: –
See! – it flickers up the sky through the night!
Ah, we safely may trust to its gleaming,
And be sure it will lead us aright –
We safely may trust to a gleaming 70
That cannot but guide us aright,
Since it flickers up to Heaven through the night."

Thus I pacified Psyche and kissed her,
And tempted her out of her gloom –
And conquered her scruples and gloom; 75
And we passed to the end of the vista,
But were stopped by the door of a tomb –
By the door of a legended tomb;
And I said: "What is written, sweet sister,
On the door of this legended tomb?" 80
She replied: "Ulalume – Ulalume –
'Tis the vault of thy lost Ulalume!"

Then my heart it grew ashen and sober
As the leaves that were crisped and sere –
As the leaves that were withering and sere, 85
And I cried: "It was surely October
On this very night of last year
That I journeyed – I journeyed down here –
That I brought a dread burden down here –

On this night of all nights in the year,
Ah, what demon has tempted me here?
Well I know, now, this dim lake of Auber –
 This misty mid region of Weir –
Well I know, now, this dank tarn of Auber,
 This ghoulish-woodland of Weir."

90

95

A Valentine


1846

For her this rhyme is penned, whose luminous eyes,
Brightly expressive as the twins of Laeda,
Shall find her own sweet name, that, nestling lies
Upon the page, enwrapped from every reader.
Search narrowly the lines! – they hold a treasure 5
Divine – a talisman – an amulet
That must be worn at heart. Search well the measure –
The words – the syllables! Do not forget
The trivialest point, or you may lose your labor!
And yet there is in this no Gordian knot 10
Which one might not undo without a sabre,
If one could merely comprehend the plot.
Enwritten upon the leaf where now are peering
Eyes scintillating soul, there lie perdu
Three eloquent words oft uttered in the hearing 15
Of poets, by poets – as the name is a poet's, too,
Its letters, although naturally lying
Like the knight Pinto – Mendez Ferdinando –
Still form a synonym for Truth – Cease trying!
You will not read the riddle, though you do the best you can do. 20

The Valley of Unrest

1831

Once it smiled a silent dell
Where the people did not dwell;
They had gone unto the wars,
Trusting to the mild-eyed stars,
Nightly, from their azure towers,
To keep watch above the flowers, 5
In the midst of which all day
The red sun-light lazily lay.
Now each visitor shall confess
The sad valley's restlessness.
Nothing there is motionless – 10
Nothing save the airs that brood
Over the magic solitude.
Ah, by no wind are stirred those trees
That palpitate like the chill seas
Around the misty Hebrides! 15
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 – 20
Over the lilies there that wave
And weep above a nameless grave!
They wave: – from out their fragrant tops
Eternal dews come down in drops.
They weep: – from off their delicate stems 25
Perennial tears descend in gems.



Edgar Allan Poe was born on January 19, 1809, in Boston, Massachusetts. Both his parents passed when he was two, and he was taken into the home of John Allan, a tobacco exporter of Richmond, Virginia. Although Poe was never legally adopted, he used his foster father's name as his middle name.

In 1827 he published, in Boston, *Tamerlane and Other Poems*, the first volume of his poems, published anonymously. In 1831, he published the book *Poems*, by Edgar A. Poe. In 1833, he won a cash prize for the short story "MS. Found in a Bottle". In 1835, Poe joined the magazine *Southern Literary Messenger*.

He lived in New York City and in Philadelphia, where he became editor of *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*, writing literary criticism, reviews, poems, and some of his most famous stories. In 1840, Poe published *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*, a two-volume set of his stories.

As literary editor of *Graham's Magazine*, he wrote the famous stories, "A Descent into the Maelström", and "The Masque of Red Death". In 1843, Poe won a prize for his story "The Gold Bug". This story, along with such earlier tales as "The Purloined Letter" and "The Murders in the Rue Morgue", set the standard of the modern detective story. He reached the heights of his fame in 1845 with his poem "The Raven". That same year he was appointed literary critic of the *New York Mirror*.

Poe died in October 7, 1849, in Baltimore, Maryland, and the notes from his lectures were published posthumously in 1850, under the title *The Poetic Principles*. This work, along with *The Philosophy of Furniture* (1840), *The Rationale of Verse* (1843), and *The Philosophy of Composition* (1846) ranks among the best examples of Poe's inventiveness.

