

AN ENIGMA

“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 lie concealed within’t.

1847.

[See previous page.]

TO MY MOTHER

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—
 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,
 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.
 1849.

[The above was addressed to the poet’s mother-in-law, Mrs. Clemm.—Ed.]

FOR ANNIE

THANK Heaven! the crisis—
 The danger is past,
 And the lingering illness
 Is over at last—
 And the fever called "Living"
 Is conquered at last.

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

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

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

The sickness—the nausea—
 The pitiless pain—
 Have ceased, with the fever
 That maddened my brain—
 With the fever called "Living"
 That burned in my brain.

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

Of a water that flows,
 With a lullaby sound,
 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
 That my room it is gloomy
 And narrow my bed—
 For man never slept
 In a different bed;
 And, to *sleep*, you must slumber
 In just such a bed.

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

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

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

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

When the light was extinguished,
 She covered me warm,
 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,
 Now in my bed,
 (Knowing her love)
 That you fancy me dead—
 And I rest so contentedly,
 Now in my bed,
 (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
 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—
 With the thought of the light
 Of the eyes of my Annie.

TO F—

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.

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

1845.

TO FRANCES S. OSGOOD

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.

1845.

ELDORADO

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

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

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

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

1849.

EULALIE

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.
 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
 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,
 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—
 While ever to her young Eulalie upturns her violet
 eye.

1845.

A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM

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

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

1849.

11—Poe—V

TO MARIE LOUISE (SHEW)

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,
 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!"
 At thy 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,
 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.

1847.

TO MARIE LOUISE (SHEW)

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:
 And now, as if in mockery of that boast,
 Two words—two foreign soft dissyllables—
 Italian tones, made only to be murmured
 By angels dreaming in the moonlit "dew
 That hangs like chains of pearl on Hermon hill,"—
 Have stirred from out the abysses of his heart,
 Unthought-like thoughts that are the souls of
 thought,
 Richer, far wider, far diviner visions
 Than even the seraph harper, Israfel,
 (Who has "the sweetest voice of all God's crea-
 tures")
 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 can not write—I can not speak or think—
 Alas, I can not feel; for 'tis not feeling,
 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,
 Amid empurpled vapors, far away
 To where the prospect terminates—*thee only!*

1848.

THE CITY IN THE SEA

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.
 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
 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—
 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—
 Up many and many a marvellous shrine
 Whose wreathèd friezes intertwine
 The viol, the violet, and the vine.
 Resignedly beneath the sky
 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
 Yawn level with the luminous waves;
 But not the riches there that lie
 In each idol's diamond eye—
 Not the gayly-jewelled dead
 Tempt the waters from their bed;
 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
 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—
 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,
 Down, down that town shall settle hence,
 Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,
 Shall do it reverence.

THE SLEEPER

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,
 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;
 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.
 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?
 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
 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!
 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!
 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!
 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!

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—

Some vault that oft hath flung its black
 And wingèd panels fluttering back,
 Triumphant, o'er the crested palls,
 Of her grand family funerals—
 Some sepulchre, remote, alone,
 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!
 It was the dead who groaned within.

1845.

BRIDAL BALLAD

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

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
 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 revery came o'er me,
 And to the churchyard 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,
 And thus the plighted vow,
 And, though my faith be broken,
 And, though my heart be broken,
 Behold the golden token
 That *proves* me happy now!

Would to 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
 May not be happy now.

1845.

NOTES

1. "The Raven" was first published on the 29th January, 1845, in the New York "Evening Mirror"—a paper its author was then assistant editor of. It was prefaced by the following words, understood to have been written by N. P. Willis:—"We are permitted to copy (in advance of publication) from the second number of the "American Review," the following remarkable poem by Edgar Poe. In our opinion, it is the most effective single example of 'fugitive poetry' ever published in this country, and unsurpassed in English poetry for subtle conception, masterly ingenuity of versification, and consistent sustaining of imaginative lift and 'pokerishness.' It is one of those 'dainties bred in a book' which we feed on. It will stick to the memory of everybody who reads it." In the February number of the "American Review" the poem was published as by "Quarles," and it was introduced by the following note, evidently suggested if not written by Poe himself.

["The following lines from a correspondent—besides the deep, quaint strain of the sentiment, and the curious introduction of some ludicrous touches amidst the serious and impressive, as was doubtless intended by the author—appears to us one of the most felicitous specimens of unique rhyming which has for some time met our eye. The resources of English rhythm for varieties of melody, measure, and sound, producing corresponding diversities of effect, having been thoroughly studied, much more perceived, by very few poets in the language. While the classic tongues, especially the Greek, possess, by power of accent, several advantages for versification over our own, chiefly through greater abundance of spondaic feet, we have other and very great advantages of sound by the modern usage of rhyme. Alliteration is nearly the only effect of that kind which the ancients had in common with us. It will be seen that much of the melody of 'The Raven' arises from alliteration, and the studious use of similar sounds in unusual places. In regard to its measure, it may be noted that

if all the verses were like the second, they might properly be placed merely in short lines, producing a not uncommon form; but the presence in all the others of one line—mostly the second in the verse" (stanza?)—"which flows continuously, with only an aspirate pause in the middle, like that before the short line in the Sapphic Adonic, while the fifth has at the middle pause no similarity of sound with any part besides, gives the versification an entirely different effect. We could wish the capacities of our noble language in prosody were better understood."—Ed. "Am. Rev."

2. The bibliographical history of "The Bells" is curious. The subject, and some lines of the original version, having been suggested by the poet's friend, Mrs. Shew, Poe, when he wrote out the first draft of the poem, headed it, "The Bells, By Mrs. M. A. Shew." This draft, now the editor's property, consists of only seventeen lines, and read thus:—

I.

The bells!—ah, the bells!
The little silver bells!
How fairy-like a melody there floats
From their throats—
From their merry little throats—
From the silver, tinkling throats
Of the bells, bells, bells—
Of the bells!

II.

The bells!—ah, the bells!
The heavy iron bells!
How horrible a monody there floats
From their throats—
From their deep-toned throats—
From their melancholy throats!
How I shudder at the notes
Of the bells, bells, bells—
Of the bells!

In the autumn of 1848 Poe added another line to this poem, and sent it to the editor of the "Union Magazine." It was not

published. So, in the following February, the poet forwarded to the same periodical a much enlarged and altered transcript. Three months having elapsed without publication, another revision of the poem, similar to the current version, was sent, and in the following October was published in the "Union Magazine."

3. This poem was first published in Colton's "American Review" for December, 1847, as "To——— Ulalume: a Ballad." Being reprinted immediately in the "Home Journal," it was copied into various publications with the name of the editor, N. P. Willis, appended, and was ascribed to him. When first published, it contained the following additional stanza which Poe subsequently, at the suggestion of Mrs. Whitman, wisely suppressed:—

Said we then—we two, then—"Ah, can it
Have been that the woodlandish ghouls—
The pitiful, the merciful ghouls—
To bar up our path and to ban it
From the secret that lies in these wolds—
Had drawn up the spectre of a planet
From the limbo of lunar souls—
This sinfully scintillant planet
From the Hell of the planetary souls?"

4. "To Helen" (Mrs. S. Helen Whitman) was not published until November, 1848, although written several months earlier. It first appeared in the "Union Magazine," and with the omission, contrary to the knowledge or desire of Poe, of the line, "Oh, God! oh, Heaven—how my heart beats in coupling those two words."

5. "Annabel Lee" was written early in 1849, and is evidently an expression of the poet's undying love for his deceased bride, although at least one of his lady admirers deemed it a response to her admiration. Poe sent a copy of the ballad to the "Union Magazine," in which publication it appeared in January, 1850, three months after the author's death. While suffering from "hope deferred" as to its fate, Poe presented a copy of "Annabel Lee" to the editor of the "Southern Literary Messenger," who published it in the November number of his periodical, a

month after Poe's death. In the meantime the poet's own copy, left among his papers, passed into the hands of the person engaged to edit his works, and he quoted the poem in an obituary of Poe, in the New York "Tribune," before any one else had an opportunity of publishing it.

6. "A Valentine," one of three poems addressed to Mrs. Osgood, appears to have been written early in 1846.

7. "An Enigma," addressed to Mrs. Sarah Anna Lewis ("Stella"), was sent to that lady in a letter, in November, 1847, and the following March appeared in Sartain's "Union Magazine."

8. The sonnet, "To My Mother" (Maria Clemm), was sent for publication to the short-lived "Flag of our Union," early in 1849, but does not appear to have been issued until after its author's death, when it appeared in the "Leaflets of Memory" for 1850.

9. "For Annie" was first published in the "Flag of our Union," in the spring of 1849. Poe, annoyed at some misprints in this issue, shortly afterwards caused a corrected copy to be inserted in the "Home Journal."

10. "To F——" (Frances Sargeant Osgood) appeared in the "Broadway Journal" for April, 1845. These lines are but slightly varied from those inscribed "To Mary," in the "Southern Literary Messenger" for July, 1835, and subsequently republished, with the two stanzas transposed, in "Graham's Magazine" for March, 1842, as "To One Departed."

11. "To F—s S. O—d," a portion of the poet's triune tribute to Mrs. Osgood, was published in the "Broadway Journal" for September, 1845. The earliest version of these lines appeared in the "Southern Literary Messenger" for September, 1835, as "Lines written in an Album," and was addressed to Eliza White, the proprietor's daughter. Slightly revised, the poem reappeared in Burton's "Gentleman's Magazine" for August, 1839, as "To——."

12. Although "Eldorado" was published during Poe's lifetime, in 1849, in the "Flag of our Union," it does not appear to have ever received the author's finishing touches.

POEMS OF MANHOOD

LENORE

'Ah, broken is the golden bowl! the spirit flown forever!

Let the bell toll!—a saintly soul floats on the Stygian river.

And, Guy de Vere, hast *thou* no tear?—weep now or never more!

See! on yon drear and rigid bier low lies thy love, Lenore!

Come! let the burial rite be read—the funeral song be sung!—

An anthem for the queenliest dead that ever died so young—

A dirge for her, the doubly dead in that she died so young.

"Wretches! ye loved her for her wealth and hated her for her pride,

And when she fell in feeble health, ye blessed her—that she died!

How *shall* the ritual, then, be read?—the requiem how be sung

By you—by yours, the evil eye—by yours, the slanderous tongue

That did to death the innocence that died, and died so young?"