

Great Short Works of Edgar Allan Poe: Poems Tales Criticism (Perennial Classics)

By Edgar Allan Poe

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The classic poems and spine-tingling stories of a Gothic American master collected in one volume.

Of all the American masters, Edgar Allan Poe staked out perhaps the most unique and vivid reputation, as a master of the macabre. Even today, in the age of horror movies and high-tech haunted houses, Poe is the first choice of entertainment for many who want a spine-chilling thrill.

Born in Boston in 1809, and dead at the age of 40, Poe wrote across several fields during his life, noted for his poetry and short stories as well as his criticism. The best of each of these is collected here, including the classic poem *The Raven*, and timeless stories like *The Tell-Tale Heart*. In his introduction to this volume, G. R. Thompson argues that Poe was a great satirist and comedic craftsman, as well as a formidable Gothic writer. "All of Poe's fiction," Thompson writes, "and the poems as well, can be seen as one coherent piece&#8212as the work of one of the greatest ironists of world literature."

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) reigned unrivaled in his mastery of mystery. Born in Boston, he was orphaned at age three, expelled from West Point for gambling and became an alcoholic. In 1836 he secretly wed his thirteen-year-old cousin. *The Raven*, published in 1845, made Poe famous. He died in 1849 under what remain suspicious circumstances.

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Chapter One

Poems

DREAMS

Oh! that my young life were a lasting dream!
My spirit not awak'ning till the beam
Of an Eternity should bring the morrow:
Yes! tho' that long dream were of hopeless sorrow,
'Twere better than the dull reality
Of waking life to him whose heart shall be,
And bath been ever, on the chilly earth,
A chaos of deep passion from his birth!

But should it be-that dream eternally
Continuing-as dreams have been to me
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
In the summer sky; in dreamy fields of light,
And left unbeedingly my very heart
In climes of mine imagining--apart
From mine own home, with beings that have been
Of mine own thought--wbat more could I have seen?

'Twas once and only once and the wild hour
From my remembrance shall not pass-some power
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
That dream was as that night wind-let it pass.

I have been bappy--tbo' but in a dream.
I have been happy--and I love the theme --
Dreams! in their vivid colouring of life-
As in that fleeting, shadowy, misty strife

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.

[1827, 1828]

SPIRITS OF THE DEAD

I

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

II

Be silent in that solitude,
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 overshadow thee: be still.

III

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,
To thy weariness shall seem
As a burning and a fever
Which would cling to thee for ever.

IV

Now are thoughts thou shalt not banish
Now are visions ne'er to vanish
From thy spirit shall they pass
No more-like dew-drop from the grass.

V

The breeze---the breath of God-is still-

And the mist upon the hill
Shadowy-shadowy-yet unbroken,
Is a symbol and a token-
How it hangs upon the trees,
A mystery of mysteries!--
[1827, 1839]

EVENING STAR

'Twas noontide of summer,
And mid-time of night;
And stars, in their orbits,
Shone pale, thro' the light
Of the brighter, cold moon,
'Mid planets her slaves,
Herself in the Heavens
Her beam on the waves.
I gaz'd awhile
On her cold smile;
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,
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,
And more I admire
Thy distant fire,
Than that colder, lowly light.
[1827]

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