



Using Music to Understand Poe's "The Raven" A Comparison of Literary and Music Terms

Grades: (9-12) and College
(The material can be simplified or expanded to fit the grade level.)

Subject Areas: Language Arts (Literature) and Performing Arts (Music)

Duration: Will vary

Introduction:

Edgar Allan Poe's famous poem, "The Raven," is noted for its lingering rhythms, sonorous rhymes, and gothic themes. Sounds musical, doesn't it? But these are literary devices that were used in creating the mood in his poem.

Just as Edgar Allan Poe deliberately crafted the literary rhyme and rhythm used in "The Raven" to draw the reader more completely into the macabre world of the poem, music can also be used as a vehicle to convey mood and themes. Compare those literary devices to techniques a musician might use. It is no wonder that Poe's "The Raven" has been used by musicians over the years to spark their creative muses.

To Poe, the poet, death was filled with mystery and sadness. The tone of "The Raven" relies as much on its literary devices creating rhyming and rhythmic patterns, as on the meaning of the words. Poe chose beauty to be the theme of the poem, with the underlying mood of melancholy. In the eyes of the poets of that day, the death of a beautiful woman would be the ultimate way to experience the Romantic ideal.

With the addition of music written to mirror the mood of the narrator, the listener can hear and feel the melancholy as he remembers the beautiful Lenore, as well as experience his growing madness and horror as he is tormented by the raven's presence. Poetry is learned more effectively by experiencing it through multiple sensory modes. In other words, comprehension is improved by using music to understand Poe, as well as using Poe to understand music.

Poe declared in his essay, "The Poetic Principle": "It is in Music, perhaps, that the soul most nearly attains the great end for which, when inspired by the Poetic Sentiment,.. the creation of supernal Beauty....We are often made to feel, with a shivering delight, that from an earthly harp are stricken notes which cannot have been unfamiliar to the angels. And thus there can be little doubt that in the **union of Poetry with Music** in its popular sense, we shall find the widest field for the Poetic development."

Thus, poetry and music combined makes, well, beautiful music. And that's what Poe meant by developing things familiar to the angels.

" Music...is so vitally important an adjunct, that he is simply silly who declines its assistance..."
--Edgar Allan Poe, "The Poetic Principle"

Guiding Question:

1. How can studying literary devices and music composition assist in understanding and appreciating Poe's poetry, "The Raven"?

Objective:

1. By learning about literary devices and music techniques, students can observe their use by authors and composers to create the rhythm and theme development of "The Raven."
2. Students will be better able to understand the emotions and meaning of "The Raven" by hearing Poe's words put to music, as well as by singing the words themselves.

Materials Needed:

1. The lists of literary terms and music definitions and examples found in this Lesson Plan.
2. The poem, "The Raven" by Edgar Allan Poe. (Since several versions of the poem are in print, it is suggested you download the PDF version used for this music project at http://halloweencarols.com/music/the_raven.)
3. Music for "The Raven": Vocal and Instrumental Versions
 - *Edgar Allan Poe's The Raven*, by Kristen Lawrence. (Music is available for purchase as digital and audio CD from CD Baby, Amazon, iTunes, etc.)
 - YouTube music video: "The Raven" Kristen Lawrence – Part 1 and Part 2 – (<http://www.youtube.com/VorswellMusic>)

Additional Resources:

4. "A Musical Setting of Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Raven' – My Philosophy of Composition," by Kristen Lawrence, where she discusses, verse-by-verse, the musical theory and devices used to create her musical setting of Poe's poem. (PDF download is available at http://halloweencarols.com/music/the_raven)

Activities:

1. Discuss how both words and music can help convey emotion and understanding of a movie, song, story, or poem. Note that both writers and composers have guidelines to follow and techniques to use.
2. Find examples of the following literary devices being used in the poem, "The Raven" (see attached reference sheet for definitions and examples.) Discuss how Poe's use of these devices contributes to the rhythm and mood of the poem.

Alliteration	Meter	Rhyme scheme
Assonance	Motif	Stanza
Consonance	Mood or Tone	Symbolism
Climax	Repetition	Theme
Internal rhyme	Rhythm	

3. Discuss the following music techniques that may be used in creating a musical setting of a poem (see attached reference sheet for definitions and examples). Compare how they may be similar in purpose to the literary devices used in Poe's "The Raven":

Chord	Harmony	Motif
Chord Progression	Harmonic rhythm	Theme
Chromaticism	Interlude	Tone
Dissonance	Major & Minor	

4. SING ALONG: Have students sing along or follow the words of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven" to the music by Kristen Lawrence. (Music can be heard on YouTube or for purchase at CDBaby, Amazon, or iTunes.)



Definitions and Examples of Literary Terms Used In Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven"

Edgar Allan Poe was a master of writing with the use of literary devices. Here is one line from the poem "The Raven" that uses alliteration, assonance, and consonance.

"And the silken sad unccertain rustling of each purple curtain"

Alliteration – The repetition of consonant sounds, usually at the beginning of words.

- alliteration is shown in the "s" sound at the beginning of "silken" and "sad"

Assonance – The repetition of vowel sounds, usually within words.

- assonance is the "ur" sound in "purple" and "curtain"

Consonance – The repetition of consonant sounds, usually in the more important words or in the accented syllables.

- consonance is the "s" sound in "unccertain" and "rustling"

Climax – The turning point of the action in the plot of a play or story. The climax represents the point of greatest tension in the work.

- Poe began writing the poem with what is now verse sixteen, which brought the narrator's "interrogation" of the raven to a climax, making sure that no preceding stanza would "surpass this in rhythmical effect." (Poe, "The Philosophy of Composition.")
- Poe builds up the tension in this poem, stanza by stanza, but after the climaxing stanza (16), he releases the tension and has the narrator express that there is no meaning in searching for a moral in the raven's "nevermore."

Internal rhyme – The rhyming of words within a line of poetry, not just at the end of the lines.

- Great poets like Poe like to bend the rules sometimes to create an even better effect. "The Raven" has two unique internal rhyme schemes – one in the 1st line of each stanza, and a second rhyme in the 3rd and part of the 4th line of each stanza.
- Internal, or middle, rhymes usually occur within the same line, like the words "lonely" and "only" in the tenth stanza. But see how Poe created the internal rhyme of "uttered," "fluttered," and "muttered," which spills over into two lines instead of one. Because the rhymes still occur *inside* the lines – not among words at the *end* of each line – this is still considered an internal rhyme scheme. (Tricky, tricky Poe!)

But the raven, sitting **lonely** on that placid bust, spoke **only**
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
Nothing further then he **uttered**, not a feather then he **fluttered**;
Till I scarcely more than **muttered**, "Other friends have flown before;
On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my hopes have flown before."
Then the bird said, "Nevermore."

Meter – Regular rhythm.

- The meter in “The Raven” is called trochaic octameter. A trochee (the adjective is "trochaic") is a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed one. Octameter means it has eight syllable pairs in a line (see **Rhythm** for an example).

Motif – A recurrent, dominant thematic element in an artistic or literary work.

- Poe chose Beauty to be the theme of the poem, since "Beauty is the sole legitimate province of the poem." (Poe, “The Philosophy of Composition”)

Mood or Tone – The emotional attitude the author takes toward the subject.

- Poe stated in his “The Philosophy of Composition,” that the mood in “The Raven” is that of melancholy.

Repetition – The repeating of words, phrases, and word patterns

- In writing the poem, Poe worked backwards from stanza 16 and used the word "Nevermore" in different ways, so that even with the repetition of this word, it would not prove to be monotonous.

Rhythm – The pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables of words in a line of verse.

- To achieve his musical effect, Poe uses rhyming words in the same line (internal rhyme), a word at the end of one line that rhymes with a word at the end of another line (end rhyme), alliteration, and a regular pattern of accented and unaccented syllables. This pattern uses a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable, with a total of sixteen syllables in each line. In this line, the capitalized letters represent the stressed syllables and the lower-case letters, the unstressed ones. (See **Meter**)

ONCE u/PON a **MID**/night **DREAR**/y, **WHILE** i **POND**/ered **WEAK** and **WEAR**/y

Rhyme scheme – The pattern of rhymes used in a poem, usually marked by letters to symbolize the pattern of rhyming words.

- Poe used the pattern ABCBBB in “The Raven.”

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary ,	A
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore –	B
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping ,	C
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door –	B
""Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door –	B
Only this and nothing more ."	B

Symbolism – The use of one thing to stand for or suggest another, rather than the literal meaning.

- **The Raven** is symbolic of a messenger of death and establishes the narrator's "Mournful and Never-ending Remembrance." (Poe, “The Philosophy of Composition”)

"And my soul from out that shadow, that lies floating on the floor, shall be lifted - nevermore!"

Theme – The central and dominating idea in a literary work.

- Poe chose **Beauty** to be the theme of “The Raven,” and then considered sadness or **melancholy** to be the tone of the highest manifestation of beauty; “it excites the sensitive soul to tears.” (Poe, “The Philosophy of Composition”)
- Of all the melancholy topics, Poe wanted to use the one that was universally understood – **Death**. Poe believed that the death of a beautiful woman was the “most poetical topic, especially when narrated by the lips of a bereaved lover.” (Poe, “The Philosophy of Composition”)



Illustration by Gustave Dore



Definitions and Examples of Music Terms Used in Kristen Lawrence's "The Raven"

The following are some terms and examples used in describing the musical setting of the poem. For a verse-by-verse explanation, please refer to the complete essay, "A Musical Setting of Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Raven' – My Philosophy of Composition," by Kristen Lawrence. What Poe has done with words, she has endeavored to express with music.

Chords – Any harmonic set of two or more notes that is heard as if sounding simultaneously.

- Verse 6 – The chords are altered to signify the intensity of his emotions. The last line touches on the Dorian mode, with Em, A7, Em. This scale sounds otherworldly, so it truly fits "Tis the wind and nothing more."
- Verse 8 – Disneyland gets a tip-of-the-hat whenever the word "grim" appears in this poem. The theme song of the Haunted Mansion is called "Grim Grinning Ghosts," and it uses a certain chord throughout the piece – a **dominant seventh with a diminished fifth**. The strings are moved up higher and higher, ending on a fully **diminished G seventh** chord to convey "wandering from the nightly shore." On the next two lines, the combination of chords is used to evoke a bold, "lordly" feeling – Gm, D, B, Em, C#m, C, A, B, G#m, D, E.
- Verse 10 – For the entire fifth line, only two chords, Em and Am, go back and forth. These two chords played over and over sound like sadness; the narrator is *so sad* – "On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my hopes have flown before."
- Verse 15 – On the word "evil," a fully diminished seventh chord (D# diminished seventh) is used, which contains two "devil's fifths," the traditional name for a diminished fifth because it's not a perfect fifth. Another variation of this chord is used on "devil" (G# diminished seventh).

Chord Progression – A series of **chord changes** that aims for a definite goal of establishing (or contradicting) a tonality founded on a key, root, or tonic chord.

- Verse 8 – To musically suggest the word "beguiling," the strings perform a particular chord progression from G7 to F#m. This was also used in verse 12 when "beguiling" appears again.
- Verse 12 – The "grim" chord (as explained in verse 8) is used again in the fifth line – in this case, an E-flat seventh diminished fifth in the first inversion. For the rest of the macabre adjectives, an equally "dark" chord progression is used, full of half-steps and diminished intervals.

Chromaticism – A compositional technique interspersing the primary diatonic pitches and chords with other pitches of the chromatic scale, all half-steps. Chromaticism is in contrast or addition to tonality or diatonicism (the major and minor scales).

- Verse 15 – The linear chromaticism in this verse is increased to illustrate the climaxing of the narrator's crazed emotions.

Dissonance – A combination of notes that are considered to be unstable (or temporary, transitional), and in general terms, sound harsh or unpleasant to most people.

- Verse 9 – On “fowl” in the first line, and “bird” in the fourth, dissonance is created with a minor chord and 2-1 suspension – in each case to foreshadow that the raven will soon become less a marvel and more an aggravation.

Harmony – Combination of two or more tones played together in the background while a melody is being played. Harmony also refers to the study of chord progressions.

- Verse 13 – A return to the original chords gives the ear a foundational “reference” to compare with all the wild places the harmonies have been taken. It illustrates that the narrator’s mind and emotions have been to many places since the beginning of this evening and the appearance of the raven, and now he’s assessing where he is.

Harmonic rhythm – The rate at which the chords change. Also known as **harmonic tempo**.

- Verse 11 – The harmonic rhythm increases throughout the verse to show the narrator’s agitation.

Interlude – Short movement connecting the main parts of the composition.

- Verse 13 - Just as the narrator’s attention focuses on the “cushion’s velvet lining” where he is sitting, his thoughts return to Lenore. To illustrate the fresh pain coursing through him, the top accompaniment line is moved up by half-steps on “*She* shall press, ah, nevermore!” The following interlude immediately goes into the heartbeat theme because his pulse has increased with this poignant memory.

Major – One of the modes of the tonal system. Music written in major keys has a positive affirming character.

- Verse 8 – To give “smiling” a slightly happy feeling, it was given the relative major chord (G) followed by a dominant-related major chord (C), instead of the original minor-key cadence of (Am, B)

Melody – A combination of pitch and rhythm. Melodies often consist of one or more musical phrases or motifs, and are usually repeated throughout a song or piece in various forms.

- The melody of “The Raven” is generally in the key of E minor. It makes a brief escape from E minor in the fourth line to C minor-ish, but quickly returns to E minor. Within a diatonic structure there is a set of chords that naturally decided to go with that melody.

Minor – One of the modes of the tonal system. The minor mode can be identified by the dark, melancholic mood.

- Verse 1 – The basic harmonies begin in undecorated chords to establish the scene. **E minor** has been traditionally associated with death.

Motif – A theme, idea, or subject that is developed.

- **Verse 4** – The strings play pizzicato (plucking instead of bowing) on “and so gently you came rapping,” to connote gentle beak action on the window. The pizzicato motif continues in the next line to convey more tapping. To start painting the narrator’s gradual descent into madness, diminished chords are introduced for the first time on “you came tapping.”

Theme – A complete melody or rhythm that is of fundamental importance in a piece of music. The following are the themes used in Kristen Lawrence’s composition *The Raven*:

- **Lenore Theme** – It stretches up two perfect 5ths and then, achingly, a half-step more, before returning back down. It is used to convey prettiness and poignancy. You’ll hear the Lenore theme at the beginning and then weave in several times throughout the piece. This theme is incorporated into the strings during Verse 17 with the phrase “Leave my loneliness unbroken!” – the last time the theme plays.
- **Heartbeat Theme** – A melodic, strong rhythmic theme that conveys the narrator’s fears and upsetting memories. The heartbeat theme first pulses out in the interlude after verse 5. He has just opened his door and whispered the word, “Lenore,” then hears this very word whispered back at him out of nowhere. Yes, that would start the heart beating. It is a melodic theme, but also a strong rhythmic theme that was written to move and give life to the repeated verse melody, and to convey the madness that grows within him as the poem progresses.
- **Yearning Theme** – This theme first appears at the end of the third verse. It goes upwards, then down, then upwards twice before submitting back down, to illustrate how our hopes and emotions rise and sink regarding a subject that is tender to us. This theme paints the melancholy air, which dampens his hopes, for Poe sets out to portray Death as the most melancholy of all situations.
- **The Raven Theme** – The sustained organ E pedal point is used to show that the Raven’s ominous presence is just *there*, like the sorrow that underlies everything. It is bare and simple, but powerful in its unique frequency. That sorrow. That overwhelming feeling of loss that seems to underline everything – or as Poe puts it, “Mournful and Never-ending Remembrance.”
 - **Verse 7** – This is the verse in which the raven first makes its appearance, with the raven theme coming in during the first two lines. This E pedal point underlines everything – a symbol of how this raven will affect his thoughts. The original harmonies are used above this low drone, which effect makes a surreal scene. You will hear it at several points throughout the piece as the raven’s presence continues to burden the narrator’s mind.
 - **Verse 18** – For this final verse the raven theme is used throughout with the original harmonies. The E pedal point illustrates how the narrator is convinced the raven will always be there, underlining everything in his mind and heart – an ending where he claims his soul “shall be lifted nevermore.”

Tone – The intonation, pitch, mode, and modulation of a composition expressing the meaning, feeling, or attitude of the music.

- **Verse 9** – To give the listeners’ ears a break from the mostly-E-minor tonality at the half way verse, it was changed to the relative major G at “Much I marveled,” to show contrast.

Background Reading and Teacher Resources

[Edgar Allan Poe and Music](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edgar_Allan_Poe_and_music) - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edgar_Allan_Poe_and_music
- Wikipedia Article on musicians who have created Poe-based works

[HalloweenCarols.com - Teacher Resources for "The Raven"](http://halloweencarols.com/music/the_raven) -
http://halloweencarols.com/music/the_raven
- "A Musical Setting of Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Raven'" by Kristen Lawrence
- Poem: "The Raven" by Edgar Allan Poe
- Teacher Lesson Plan - Using Music To Better Understand "The Raven"

[House of Usher](http://houseofusher.net/) - <http://houseofusher.net/>
- "A decade and a half being the web's 'premiere' Edgar Allan Poe fan site"

[Knowing Poe](http://knowingpoe.thinkport.org/writer/internal.asp) - <http://knowingpoe.thinkport.org/writer/internal.asp>
- Explanation of "The Raven" rhyme schemes

[Poe Stories](http://www.poestories.com/) - <http://www.poestories.com/>
- Short stories and poems by Edgar Allan Poe.
- Story summaries, quotes, and linked vocabulary words and definitions for educational reading.
- It also includes a short biography, a timeline of Poe's life, and links to other Poe sites.

[Schmoop - Edgar Allan Poe](http://www.shmoop.com/the-raven/) - <http://www.shmoop.com/the-raven/>
- Explanation of Literary Terms

["The Philosophy of Composition" by Edgar Allan Poe](http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/poe/composition.html) -
<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/poe/composition.html>
- Poe's explanation behind his writing of "The Raven"

[The Poe Decoder](http://www.poedecoder.com/essays/raven/) - <http://www.poedecoder.com/essays/raven/>
- One of the first pages available to provide factual information on Poe's life.
- A gathering point for Poe enthusiasts on the Internet.

["The Poetic Principle" by Edgar Allan Poe](http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/POE/poetic.html) - <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/POE/poetic.html>
- Essay by Poe on how he believes poetry should be written

Lesson Plan Authors:

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Lawrence's music, "The Raven," has been used in several cities' presentations of *THE BIG READ: The Short Stories and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*, sponsored by the National Endowment of the Arts to encourage reading, art, music, through performances of Poe's works in the community.

Education Standards

This lesson plan may be used to address some academic standards listed below.

NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English) and IRA (International Reading Association) Standards for English Language Arts

- **Standard 3.** Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
- **Standard 6.** Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.
- **Standard 8.** Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information to create and communicate knowledge.

(McREL) Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

These standards are drawn from Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education: 2nd Edition.

Art Connections

- **Standard 1.** Understands connections among the various art forms and other disciplines.
- **Benchmark 2.** Knows how ideas and emotions are used in the various art forms.

National Standards for Arts Education

Grades: K-4, 5-8, 9-12

- **Music Standard 6.** Listening to, analyzing, and describing music
- **Music Standard 8.** Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.

California Visual and Performing Arts Standards – All Grades

- Processing, analyzing, and responding to sensory information through the language and skills unique to music. Student read, notate, listen to, analyze, and describe music and other aural information, using the terminology of music.

THE RAVEN

Poem: Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849)

¹ 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 someone gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
"Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door;
Only this, and nothing more."

² 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 forevermore.

³ 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."

⁴ 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.

⁵ Deep into the 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.

⁶ Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping, something 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."

⁷ 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

⁸ Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,
"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no
craven,
Ghastly, grim, and ancient raven, wandering from the nightly shore,
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore."
Quoth the raven, "Nevermore."

⁹ Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning, little relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door,
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
With such name as "Nevermore."

¹⁰ But the raven, sitting lonely on that placid bust, spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
Nothing further then he uttered; not a feather then he fluttered;
Till I scarcely more than muttered, "Other friends have flown before;
On the morrow he will leave me, as my hopes have flown before."
Then the bird said, "Nevermore."

- ¹¹ Started at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
 "Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and store,
 Caught from some unhappy master, whom unmerciful disaster
 Followed fast and followed faster, till his songs one burden bore,—
 Till the dirges of his hope that melancholy burden bore
 Of 'Never—nevermore."
- ¹² But the raven still beguiling all my fancy into smiling,
 Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird and bust and door;
 Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
 Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore,
 What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore
 Meant in croaking, "Nevermore."
- ¹³ Thus I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing
 To the fowl, whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core;
 This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining
 On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamplight gloated o'er,
 But whose velvet violet lining with the lamplight gloating o'er
 She shall press, ah, nevermore!
- ¹⁴ Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen
 censer
 Swung by seraphim whose footfalls tinkled on the tufted floor.
 "Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee—by these angels he hath
 sent thee
 Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore!
 Quaff, O quaff this kind nepenthe, and forget this lost Lenore!"
 Quoth the raven, "Nevermore!"
- ¹⁵ "Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil—prophet still, if bird or devil!
 Whether tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,
 Desolate, yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—
 On this home by horror haunted—tell me truly, I implore:
 Is there—is there balm in Gilead?—tell me—tell me I implore!"
 Quoth the raven, "Nevermore."
- ¹⁶ "Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil—prophet still, if bird or devil!
 By that heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore—
 Tell this soul with sorrow laden, if, within the distant Aidenn,
 It shall clasp a sainted maiden, whom the angels name Lenore—
 Clasp a rare and radiant maiden, whom the angels name Lenore?
 Quoth the raven, "Nevermore."
- ¹⁷ "Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" I shrieked,
 upstarting—
 "Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian shore!
 Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!
 Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust above my door!
 Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!"
 Quoth the raven, "Nevermore."
- ¹⁸ And the raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting
 On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
 And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming;
 And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws the shadow on the floor,
 And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor
 Shall be lifted—nevermore!
- * * *
- For more information about Kristen Lawrence's music, *Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven,"* visit her website: HalloweenCarols.com
- A verse-by-verse commentary: "A Musical Setting of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven"
 - A Teacher lesson plan: Using Music To Better Understand Poe's "The Raven"
 - Her music may be purchased at CDBaby.com, [iTunes](http://iTunes.com), Amazon, among others.