

# The Raven

Lou Reed

Once upon a midnight dreary, as 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 if some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door  
"Tis some visitor," I muttered, tapping at my chamber door only this  
Only this and nothing more  
Muttering I got up weakly, always I've had trouble sleeping  
Stumbling upright my mind racing, furtive thoughts flowing once more  
I there hoping for some sunrise, happiness would be a surprise  
Loneliness no longer a prize, rapping at my chamber door  
Seeking out the clever bore, lost in dreams forever more  
Only this and nothing more  
Hovering my pulse was racing, stale tobacco my lips tasting  
Scotch sitting upon my basin, remnants of the night before  
Came again infernal tapping on the door, in my mind jabbing  
Is it in or outside rapping, calling out to me once more  
The fit and fury of Lenore, nameless here forever more  
And the silken sad uncertain, rustling of the purple curtain  
Thrilled me, filled me  
With fantastic terrors never felt before, so that now, oh wind  
Stop breathing, hoping yet to calm my breathing  
'Tis some visitor entreating, entrance at my chamber door  
Some lost visitor entreating, entrance at my chamber door  
This is it, and nothing more, deep into the darkness peering  
Long I stood there, wondering fearing, doubting dreaming fantasies  
No mortal dared to dream before  
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token  
And the only word there spoken, was the whispered name, Lenore  
This I thought in out loud whispered from my lips  
The foul name festered, echoing itself merely this, and nothing more  
Back into my chamber turning, every nerve within me burning  
When once again I heard a tapping, somewhat louder than before  
"Surely," said I, surely that is something at my iron staircase  
Open the door to see what threat is, open that window, free the shutters  
Let us this mystery explore, Oh! bursting heart be still this once  
And let this mystery explore it is the wind and nothing more  
Just one Epithet I muttered as inside, I gagged and shuddered  
When with manly flirt and flutter, in there flew a stately raven  
Sleek and ravenous as any foe, not the least obeisance made he

Not a minutes gesture towards me, of recognition or politeness  
But perched above my chamber door, this fowl and salivating visage  
Insinuating with its knowledge, perched above my chamber door  
    Silent sat and staring nothing more, a-skance, a-skew  
The self's sad fancy smiles at you I swear, at this savage viscous  
Countenance it wears, though you show here scorn and shaven and  
I admit myself forlorn and craven, ghastly grim and ancient raven  
    Wandering from the opiate shores, tell me, what  
    Thy Lordly name is? That you are not nightmare sewage  
    Some dire powdered drink or inhalation  
Framed from flames of downtown lore stroke the raven never more  
And the raven sitting lonely, staring sickly at my male sex only  
That one word as if his soul in that one word, he did outpour, pathetic  
Nothing farther than he uttered, not a feather then he fluttered  
Till finally was I that muttered as I stared, dully at the floor  
    Other friends have flown and left me  
    Flown as each and every hope has flown before  
    And as you no doubt will before tomorrow  
    But the bird said never more  
Then I felt the air grow denser, perfumed from some unseen incense  
As though accepting angelic intrusion, when in fact I felt collusion  
    Before the guise, of false memories respite  
    Respite through the haze of cocaine's glory  
    I smoke and I smoke the blue vial's glory  
    To forget at once, the base Lenore  
    Stroke the raven never more  
Prophet said I, thing of evil, Prophet still, if bird or devil  
By that Heaven that bend above us, by that God we both ignore  
Tell this soul with sorrow laden, willful and destructive intent  
How had lapsed a pure heart lady, to the greediest of needs  
Sweaty arrogant dick less liar, who ascribed to nothing higher  
Than a jab from prick to a needle, straight to betrayal and disgrace  
The conscience showing not a trace, stroke the raven never more  
    Be that word our sign of parting  
Bird or fiend," I yelled upstarting, get thee back into the tempest  
Into the smoke filled bottle's shore, leave no black plume as a token  
Of the slime thy soul hath spoken, leave my loneliness unbroken  
Quit as those have quit before, take the talon from my heart  
And see that I can care no more, whatever mattered came before  
I vanished with the dead Lenore, stroke the raven never more  
    But the raven, never flitting  
Still is sitting silent sitting, above a painting silent painting  
Of the forever silenced whole and his eyes have all the seeming  
Of a demon's that is dreaming, and the lamplight over him  
Streaming throws his shadow to the floor I love she

Who hates me more, I love she who hates me more  
And my soul shall not be lifted from that shadow nevermore

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