

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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