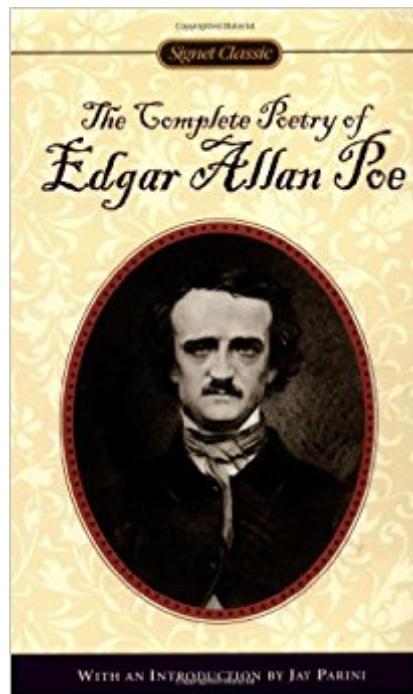


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The Complete Poetry Of Edgar Allen Poe



Synopsis

A unique, inexpensive paperback edition devoted exclusively to the author's haunting poetry contains a new introduction by a literary scholar and the complete verse of the ever-popular storyteller.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Most people know that Edgar Allan Poe wrote poetry. Of course, you'd be hard-pressed to make them quote a line that doesn't involve ravens. Well, it's time for some poetry homework -- "The Raven" is neither Poe's most beautiful nor his most striking poem. That is reserved for other, more obscure works in Poe's "Complete Poetry" -- and while one might expect the ghostly or macabre to be all throughout his work, it's also filled with transcendent beauty, wistfulness, and some truly amazing wordwork. Over his lifetime, Poe tried out many styles -- there are sonnets, short hymns, long rambling odes written in dramatic, vaguely Shakespearean style ("O, human love! thou spirit given/On Earth, of all we hope in Heaven!"), acrostics, little exercises in self-reflection, a lyrical song or two, and some haunting stories rendered in verse like the bittersweet "Annabel Lee." And the content of these poems is just as diverse. Some of them are distinctly dark -- sunken cities, tolling bells, haunted palaces, thoughts on the lingering spirits of the dead, abandoned valleys, and loved ones that have been stolen away by death ("I pray to God that she may lie/For ever with unopened eye/While the pale sheeted ghosts go by!"). And yes, it has the one about a midnight dreary, and a creepy raven with eyes like "a demon's that is dreaming." And there are a lot of moments of beauty

-- lush descriptions of nature, bittersweet dreams, love for a beautiful girl, and elfin odes to those who "put out the star-light/With the breath from their pale faces/About twelve by the moon-dial..."

The Raven, Annabel Lee, Eldorado, The City in the Sea, and The Bells are commonly found in anthologies, but much of Poe's poetry is not widely read today. I enjoyed this inexpensive introduction (published by Barnes and Noble Books) to Poe's poetry, but I was disappointed by the absence of an introduction, footnotes, and commentary. The poems are apparently arranged chronologically from 1827 to 1840; Poe's best known poems are in the latter half. Poe's best poetry is marked by creativity and innovation, sometimes unexpectedly transitioning from a theme of love and beauty to one of despair and death. I consider The City in the Sea, The Sleeper, The Valley of the Unrest, The Haunted Palace, The Conqueror Worm, For Annie, and Annabel Lee to be among the best examples of Poe's imaginative, haunting descriptions of death and dying. Poe's early poetry, and some of his later works, are reminiscent of English romantic poetry. At his own expense Poe printed his first book, Tamerlane and Other Poems (1827). Poe's style in these earliest poems - Tamerlane, Song, Dreams, Spirits of the Dead, Evening Star, A Dream Within a Dream, Stanzas, A Dream, The Happiest Day --- The Happiest Hour, and The Lake - is characterized by lyrical descriptions, flowery language, and romantic themes. I enjoyed the long poem Tamerlane. Tamerlane (or Tamburlaine, or Timur), a Tartar warrior of the fourteenth century, had amassed an immense empire, and was now reflecting on a distant, but not forgotten, youthful love. Following legend, Poe supposes that Tamerlane was born a lowly peasant, but it is more likely that he was descendant of the famous Khans. (In 1996 the newly independent Uzbekistan celebrated the 660th anniversary of the birth of Timur Khan.

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