DAY 1: TEACHING THE BASIC ELEMENTS OF POETRY

- Stanzas (how lines are grouped).
- Sound (includes rhyme, but also many other patterns).
- Rhythm (what kind of "beat" or meter the poem has).
- Figures of speech (many poems are full of metaphors and other figurative language).
- Form (there are standard types of poem).

DAY 2: SELECTING A POEM

Students learn to

1. Choose a poem they like.

DAY 3: FAMILIARIZING THEMSELVES WITH THE POEM

Students learn to

1. Read the poem carefully.
2. Read it out loud.
3. Get to know it thoroughly.

DAY 4: READING THE POEM

Students learn to

1. Find good places in the poem to take a breath.
2. Plan pauses in their delivery.
3. Plan areas in the poem to emphasize.
4. Read it briefly before class

DAY 5, 6 and 7: MEMORIZING THE POEM

Students learn to

1. Memorize the poem early.
2. Break it into small parts of a few lines.
3. Start with the first part doing a little bit every day.

**Students learn to**

a. Read it
b. Make images and connections to help them remember.
c. Close their eyes and see how much they can remember.
d. Repeat those steps until they have that section memorized.
e. Go onto the next part.
f. Repeat all the parts they have memorized one after another.

**DAY 8: LEARNING TO RECITE NATURALLY**

When reciting a poem, students ignore line breaks and even punctuation. They try to recite each sentence or phrase as naturally as possible, as if they were speaking to someone one-on-one.

**DAY 9: LEARNING TO RECITE LOUDLY AND CLEARLY**

Students learn

1. To speak loudly and clearly.
2. Not to spoil their recitation by rushing through their poem. They speak slowly and enunciate each word clearly.

**DAY 10: LEARNING TO BE EXPRESSIVE WHILE RECITING**

Students learn

1. Not to be monotonous.
2. To use the context of their poem to determine its delivery. If a poem is sad, they recite it accordingly. If the poem is funny they recite it accordingly.
3. Not to pause too long.

**DAY 11: LEARNING TO RECITE WITH CONFIDENCE**

Students learn

1. To relax
2. To stand up straight.
3. Not to rock.
4. Not to look down.
5. To speak with their mouth and throat open.
6. To keep their hands out of their pockets.

**DAY 12: LEARNING TO RECITE TO THEMSELVES**

Students learn to

1. Recite the poem loud to themselves.
2. Practice speaking clearly and standing upright.

**DAY 13: LEARNING TO RECITE TO OTHERS**

Students learn to

1. Recite to class.
2. Look at something just over the heads of their audience.

**DAY 14: RECITATION**

**DAY 15: RECITATION**

**SAMPLE POEMS FOR RECITATION**

**JUNIORS**

**LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD and the WOLF**

By Roald Dahl

As soon as Wolf began to feel
That he would like a decent meal,
He went and knocked on Grandma’s door.
When Grandma opened it, she saw
The sharp white teeth, the horrid grin,
And Wolfie said, ‘May I come in?’
Poor Grandmamma was terrified,
‘He’s going to eat me up!’ she cried.

And she was absolutely right.
He ate her up in one big bite.
But Grandmamma was small and tough,
And Wolfie wailed, `That's not enough!
I haven’t yet begun to feel
`That I have had a decent meal!'
He ran around the kitchen yelping,
`I’ve got to have a second helping!’
Then added with a frightful leer,
`I’m therefore going to wait right here
‘Till Little Miss Red Riding Hood
‘Comes home from walking in the wood.’
He quickly put on Grandma’s clothes
(Of course he hadn’t eaten those).
He dressed himself in coat and hat.
He put on shoes and after that
He even brushed and curled his hair,
Then sat himself in Grandma’s chair.
In came the little girl in red.
She stopped. She stared. And then she said,
`What great big ears you have, Grandma.’
`All the better to hear you with,’ the Wolf replied.
`What great big eyes you have, Grandma,’
said Little Red Riding Hood.
`All the better to see you with,’ the Wolf replied.

He sat there watching her and smiled.
He thought, I’m going to eat this child.
Compared with her old Grandmamma
She’s going to taste like caviare.

Then Little Red Riding Hood said, `But Grandma,
What a lovely great big furry coat you have on.’

`That’s wrong!’ cried Wolf. `Have you forgot
`To tell me what BIG TEETH I’ve got?
`Ah well, no matter what you say,
I’m going to eat you anyway,’
The small girl smiles. One eyelid flickers.
She whips a pistol from her knickers.
She aims it at the creature’s head,
And bang bang bang she shoots him dead.
A few weeks later, in the wood
I came across Miss Riding Hood.
But what a change! No cloak of red,
No silly hood upon her head.
She said, `Hello, and do please note
`My lovely furry WOLFSKIN COAT.’
WHY?
By Hugh Mcdiarmid

Concerned as I am with the West Highlands and Hebrides
Instantly to my hand is the fact
That the two greatest social and religious reformers of Modern India - Dayanandi and Gandhi
Were both born in the small peninsula of Kathiawar.

Gandhi was born at Porbandar
It is on the sea coast, jutting out into the sea
And has all the infinite variety and charm of the expanse of ocean around it.
Mists of extraordinary beauty
Constantly rise from the sea,
and encompass the land.
The sea itself is usually a brilliant utter-marine
with liquid green where the shoals lie.
The little town where Gandhi was born
Rise almost out of the sea,
And becomes a vision of glory, at sunrise and sunset,
when the slanting rays of the sun beat upon it,
Turning its turrets and pinnacles into gold.

Morvi, where Dayanandi was born, lies inland
not far away from the desolate land
Of the Rajputana desert which stretches to the North
Unbroken for hundreds of miles.
The land at Morvi is rocky,
And the country is rugged.

The differences of their birth place is clearly seen
in the differences between Dayanandi and Gandhi.

We have Porbandars and Morvis enough in Scotland
But they produce no such outstanding characters as Dayanandi and Gandhi.

WHY?

I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD
By William Wordsworth

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees, 
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.
Continuous as the stars that shine 
And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.
The waves beside them danced; but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee;
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company;
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:
For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
When is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

ECSTASY
By Victor Hugo

I was alone beside the sea, upon a starry night,
And not a cloud was in the sky, and not a sail in sight;
Beyond the limits of the world far stretched
my raptured eye,
And the forests and the mountains, and nature all around,
Seemed to unite in questioning,
in vast and mingled sound,
The billows of the ocean, and the splendor of the sky.

And the golden stars of heaven,
in their unnumbered crowd,
With harmonies ten thousand,
with voices clear and loud, Replied,
as low they bended down their radiant crowns of flame -
And the blue floods that naught
has power to govern or arrest,
Replied, as low they bended down,
the foam upon their crest -
'The Lord, our great Creator, His glory we proclaim!'
By Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow.  
My little horse must think it queer  
To stop without a farmhouse near  
Between the woods and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.  
He gives his harness bells a shake  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound's the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake.  
The woods are lovely, dark and deep.  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.

THE OWL AND THE PUSSY-CAT  
By Edward Lear

The Owl and the Pussy-cat went to sea  
In a beautiful pea-green boat,  
They took some honey, and plenty of money  
Wrapped up in a five-pound note.  
The Owl looked up to the stars above,  
And sang to a small guitar,  
"O lovely Pussy! O Pussy, my love,  
What a beautiful Pussy you are,  
You are,  
You are!  
What a beautiful Pussy you are!  
Pussy said to the Owl, "You elegant fowl!  
How charmingly sweet you sing!  
O let us be married! Too long we have tarried;  
But what shall we do for a ring?"

They sailed away, for a year and a day,  
To the land where the Bong-tree grows  
And there in a wood a Piggy-wig stood  
With a ring at the end of his nose,  
His nose,  
His nose,  
With a ring at the end of his nose.  
"Dear Pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling  
Your ring?" Said the Piggy, "I will."
So they took it away, and were married next day
By the Turkey who lives on the hill.
They dined on mince, and slices of quince,
Which they ate with a runcible spoon;
And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,
They danced by the light of the moon,
The moon,
The moon,
They danced by the light of the moon.

WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING
By W. Wordsworth

I heard a thousand blended notes
While in a grove I sat reclined
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran
And much it grieved my heart to think
What Man has made of Man

Through primrose tufts, in that sweet bower,
The periwinkle trail’d its wreaths
And ‘tis my faith, that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopp’d and play’d,
Their thoughts I cannot measure,-
But the least motion which they made
It seem’d a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from Nature be sent,
If such be Nature’s holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What Man has made of Man?

BLOW, BLOW, THOU WINTER WIND
By William Shakespeare

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.
Heigh ho! sing heigh ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly;
Then, heigh ho! the holly!
This life is most jolly.
Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
That dost not bite so high
As friend remember'd not.
Heigh ho! sing heigh ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:
Then, heigh ho! the holly!
This life is most jolly.

THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE
By W.B.Yeats

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.
And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight’s all a-glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet’s wings.
I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements gray,
I hear it in the deep heart’s core.

A BIRD CAME DOWN THE WALK
By Emily Dickinson

A Bird came down the Walk-
He did not know I saw-
He big an Angleworm in halves
And ate the fellow, raw,
And then he drank a Dew
From a convenient Grass-
And then hopped sidewise to the Wall
To let a Beetle pass-
He glanced with rapid eyes
That hurried all around-
They looked like frightened Beads,
I thought-
He stirred his Velvet Head
Like one in danger, Cautious,
I offered him a Crumb
And he unrolled his feathers
And rowed him softer home-
Than Oars divide the Ocean,
Too silver for a seam-
Or Butterflies, off Banks of Noon
Leap, plashless as they swim.

SENIORS

THE FATHER OF THE NATION
By Krishnan Parapally

India's teeming millions, we
as one entity, stand
in front of you,
bowing to you, O Mahatma!
Like a sea, boundless
and surging, our emotions,
like a vibrant wave, and
laden with love and regard.

Ever as resplendent
do we perceive you
Emerging in its midst, yonder,
as a thousand- petalled flower,
With all petals unfolding,
attaining full stature were you,
a wondrous phenomenon.

The beauteous truth that God
is one, you perceived as
the quintessence, unfailing,
of the cosmic expanse.
The principle that, with
sure foresight you saw, was
the wonder-drug that was
a remedy for religious frenzy.
For the whole world to be
beautiful, peaceful and happy,
For noble thoughts to dawn
everywhere, you kept praying.

If only a child, seeing your portrait,
moves pencil on paper.
Imprint may appear thereon,
of your outline, so vivid, so simple
So artless is your form, yet,
so profound may be the
feeling it reveals.
It may be the picture of humility
that the lines depict.
It may at once proclaim
the world's unified prayer-mood.
It may, otherwise, be your
march with the walking-stick.

Slender, your body!
Still, in God's hands, how
sublime a work, so strikingly
fulfilled through it.

Hail, the courage of action, that
by own example
held aloft "Truth and Non-violence",
as the very basis of human idealism.

At the fag end of this century
with violence ever increasing.
Of utmost necessity is your unending mission.

Hail, so glorious
An Apostle of Love!
Hail, not India alone,
but the whole world!

GANDHI THE MAN
By Eknath Easwaran

That man I love who is incapable
Of ill-will, and returns love for hatred,
Living beyond the reach of I and mine,
And of pain and pleasure. Full of mercy,
Contented, self-controlled and firm resolve,
With all his heart and all his mind given
to me - with such a one I am in love.

Not agitating the world, nor by it
Agitated, he stands above the sway
of elation, competition and fear,
Accepting life, good and bad, as it comes,
He is pure, efficient, detached, ready
to meet every demand I make on him
as a humble instrument of my work -
who serves both friend and foe with equal love,
Not buoyed up by praise, nor cast down by blame,
Alike in heat and cold, pleasure and pain,
Free from selfish attachments and self-will,
Ever full, in harmony everywhere
Firm in faith - such a one is dear to me.

THEY HAVE GONE AWAY
By Iian Scholnfed

They have gone away. They don't look at us
from the far side of burnt-out circuits.
The flames they caused to endure as embers
are taken as panaceas.
By human and birds of prey.
But us they sentenced to wait out the day.

Summer days are multitudinous with sounds,
quickening, an inner and a hidden
speech. The dead whom we love
come up in our memories.
But the dead are dead. Nothing of them remains.

What do you see, when the wick flickers
In the brimming container of oil?
Have you seen the armed columns trudge forward?
Have you seen the convoy rush towards death?
Have you seen the valley fill with corpses?
Have you seen the horrible mountain rise from the soil?

Layer on layer, those killed by history,
the martyrs, those who believed it was rational.
Have you seen a rock layered with human flesh?
Have you seen a body devoured by a dove?
Have you seen how the honest ones die?
Have you seen them turn to the heaven of the sky?

The dead whose spirits still move about
are not those who allowed it to depart.
They dead who have turned their backs on us
are those died for truth.
We permitted them into our houses
the dead and now tell them: Leave.

Listen: there is music in the palm tree,
Now and today, a message grows in us, suddenly
like the sheaf from the dream, to say:
Peace be with all.

I THINK CONTINUALLY OF THOSE WHO WERE TRULY GREAT
By Stephen Spender

I think continually of those who were truly great.
Who, from the womb, remembered the soul's history
Through corridors of light where the hours are suns,
Endless and singing. Whose lovely ambition

Was that their lips, still touched with fire,
Should tell of the Spirit, clothed from head to foot in song,
And who hoarded from the Spring branches
The desires failing across their bodies like blossoms.

What is precious, is never to forget
The essential delight of the blood drawn from ageless springs
Breaking through rocks in worlds before our earth.
Never to deny its pleasure in the morning simple light
Nor it's grave evening demand for love.
Never to allow gradually the traffic to smother
With noise and fog, the flowering of the Spirit.

Near the snow, near the sun, in the highest fields,
See how these names are feted by the waving grass
And by the streamers of white cloud
And whispers of wind in the listening sky
The names of those who in their lives fought for life,
Who wore at their hearts the fire's centre.
Born of the sun they travelled a short while toward the sun
And left the vivid air signed with their honour.
TO THE NIGHT
By P.B. Shelley

Swiftly walk over the western wave
Spirit of Night!
Out of the misty Eastern cave
Where all the long and lone daylight,
Thou wavest dream of joy and fear
Which make thee terrible and dear,
Swift be thy flight!

Wrap thy form in a mantle grey
   Star-inwrought;
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day,
Kiss her until she be wearied out:
Then wander o'er city and sea and land,
Touching all with thy opiate wand-
   Come, long-sought!

When I arose and saw the dawn,
   I sigh'd for thee;
When light rode high, and the dew was gone,
And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,
And the weary Day turn'd to his rest
Lingering like an unloved guest,
   I sigh'd for thee.

Thy brother Death came, and cried
   Wouldst thou me?
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
Murmur'd like a noon-tide bee
Shall I nestle near thy side?
Wouldst thou me? -And I replied
   No, not thee!

Death will come when thou art dead,
   Soon, too soon-
Sleep will come when thou art fled;
Of neither would I ask the boon
I ask of thee beloved Night
Swift be thine approaching flight,
   Come soon, soon!

THE SUNSET OF THE CENTURY
By Rabindranath Tagore

The last sun of the century sets amidst the blood-red clouds of the West and the whirlwind of hatred.
The naked passion of self-love of Nations, in its drunken delirium of greed, is dancing to the clash of steel and the howling verses of vengeance.

The hungry self of the Nation shall burst in a violence of fury from its own shameless feeding.
For it has made the world its food.
And licking it, crunching it and swallowing it in big morsels,
It swells and swells
Till in its midst of its unholy feast descends the sudden shaft of heaven piercing its heart of grossness.
The crimson glow of light on the horizon is not the light of thy dawn of peace, my Motherland.
It is the glimmer of the funeral pyre burning to ashes the vast flesh - the self-love of the Nation-dead under its own excess.
Thy morning waits behind the patient dark of the East,
Meek and silent.

Keep watch, India.
Bring your offerings of worship for that sacred Sunrise.
Let the first hymn of its welcome sound in your voice and sing.
'Come, Peace, thou daughter of God's own great suffering.
Come with thy treasure of contentment, the sword of fortitude,
And meekness crowning thy forehead.'

Be not ashamed, my brothers, to stand before the proud and the powerful
With your white robe of simpleness.
Let your crown be of humility, your freedom the freedom of the soul.
Build God's throne upon the ample bareness of your poverty.
And know that what is huge is not great and pride is not everlasting.

By D. H. Lawrence

Climbing through the January snow, into the Lobo canyon
Dark grow the spruce - trees, blue is the balsam, water sounds still unfrozen, and the trail is still evident.
Men!
Two men!
Men! The only animal in the world to fear!
They hesitate
We hesitate.
They have a gun.
We have no gun.
Then we all advance to meet.
Two Mexicans, strangers, emerging out of the dark snow and inwardness of the Lobo valley.
What are they doing here on this vanishing trail?
What is he carrying?
Something yellow.
A deer?
What is it friend?
A Mountain Lion -
He smiles foolishly, as if he were caught doing wrong.
And we smile, foolishly, as if we didn't know.
He is quite gentle and dark-faced.

It is a mountain lion,
A long, long slim cat, yellow like a lioness.
Dead.
He trapped her this morning, he says, smiling foolishly.
Lift up her face,
Her round, bright face, bright as a frost.
Her round fine - fashioned head, with two dead ears;
And stripes in the brilliant frost of her face, sharp, fine dark rays,
Dark, keen, fine rays in the brilliant frost of her face.
Beautiful dead eyes.

It is beautiful!
They go out towards the open;
We go into the gloom of Lobo.
And above the trees I found her lair,
A hole in the blood-orange brilliant rocks that stick up, a little cave.
And bones, and twigs, and a perilous ascent.

So, she will never leap up that way again, with the yellow flash of a mountain lion's long shoot!
And her bright striped frost-face will never watch any more, out of the shadow of the cave in the blood-orange rock,
Above the trees of the Lobo dark valley-mouth!

Instead, I look out.
And out to the dim of the desert, like a dream, never real;
And I think in this empty world beyond, how easily we might spare a million or two of humans
And never miss them.
Yet what a gap in this world, the missing white frost-face of that slim yellow mountain lion.
ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE
By John Keats

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
   My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
   One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
   But being too happy in thine happiness,
—
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees
   In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
   Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
   Cool’d a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
   Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
   Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
   With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
   And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
   What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
   Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
   Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
   And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
   Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
   Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
   Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
   And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster’d around by all her starry Fays;
   But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
   Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
   Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
   Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
   White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets cover’d up in leaves;
   And mid-May’s eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
   The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
   I have been half in love with easeful Deat h,
Call’d him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
   To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

THE RAVEN
By Edgar Allan Poe
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 some one gently rapping — rapping at my chamber door.
“Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “tapping at my chamber door —
Only this and nothing more.”

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 for evermore.

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.”

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.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering,
fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the darkness 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.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon I heard again a tapping, somewhat 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.”

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 an instant 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.

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.”

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.”

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.”

Startled 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 the melancholy burden bore
   Of ‘Never—nevermore.’”

But the Raven still beguiling all my sad soul 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.”

This 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 lamp-light gloated o’er,
But whose velvet violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o’er,
   She shall press, ah, nevermore!
Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer
Swung by Seraphim whose foot-falls 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, oh quaff this kind nepenthe, and forget this lost Lenore!”

Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”

“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.”

“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.”

“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.”
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 lamp-light o’er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor
    Shall be lifted—nevermore!

**MY LAST DUCHESS**
*By Robert Browning*

That’s my last duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf’s hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will’t please you sit and look at her? I said
“Frà Pandolf” by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, ‘twas not
Her husband’s presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess’ cheek: perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say “Her mantle laps
“Over my lady’s wrist too much,” or “Paint
“Must never hope to reproduce the faint
“Half-flush that dies along her throat”: such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart—how shall I say?—too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate’er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, ’twas all one! My favor at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men—good! but thanked
Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody’s gift. Who’d stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech—which I have not—to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, “Just this
“Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
“Or there exceed the mark”—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and make excuse,
—E’en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene’er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will’t please you rise? We’ll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master’s known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretense
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter’s self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay we’ll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!