

From Edgar Allan Poe's "The Philosophy of Composition"

The Philosophy of Composition--The essay first appeared in the April 1846 issue of [*Graham's Magazine*](#). It is uncertain if it is an authentic portrayal of Poe's own method.

I had now gone so far as the conception of a Raven, the bird of ill-omen, monotonously repeating the one word "Nevermore" at the conclusion of each stanza in a poem of melancholy tone, and in length about one hundred lines. Now, never losing sight of the object-supremeness or perfection at all points, I asked myself- "Of all melancholy topics what, according to the universal understanding of mankind, is the most melancholy?" Death, was the obvious reply. "And when," I said, "is this most melancholy of topics most poetical?" From what I have already explained at some length the answer here also is obvious- "When it most closely allies itself to Beauty: the death then of a beautiful woman is unquestionably the most poetical topic in the world, and equally is it beyond doubt that the lips best suited for such topic are those of a bereaved lover."

"The Raven"

In the essay, Poe traces the logical progression of his creation of "The Raven" as an attempt to compose "a poem that should suit at once the popular and the critical taste." He claims that he considered every aspect of the poem. The raven itself, Poe says, is meant to symbolize *Mournful and Never-ending Remembrance*. This may imply an autobiographical significance to the poem, alluding to the many people in Poe's life who had died.

Source: Wikipedia