Setting: dark, dreary December night - midnight or later
alone in his room/chamber by a dying fire

Typical Poe narrator - un-named 1st person pov

The Raven

[First published in 1845]

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! (6)

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 I sorrow for the lost Lenore -
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels named Lenore -
Nameless here for evermore. (12)

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
That held 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 enreating entrance at my chamber door -
Some late visitor enreating entrance at my chamber door:
This it is, and nothing more. (18)

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. (24)

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. (30)

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard 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!' (36)

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 a minute 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. (42)

- end rhyme
- slant rhyme = close but not exact
- internal rhyme = within the line

Lenore is dead, in Heaven.

Assonance - repetition of similar vowel sounds

Supernatural - curtains moving for no reason

Supernatural element - he wants it to be Lenore's ghost

Allusion - reference to something in the past or in literature

Pallas Athena - goddess of wisdom (classical allusion from mythology)

Perhaps symbolizes the bird is wise
The bird talks.
The bird makes him smile.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou, I 'll tell thee, art more than ever fair to paint and poetry.

Classical allusion: Pluto - god of the underworld - refers to spirits roaming from the underworld.
Now, the narrator thinks Satan sent the bird.

'Prophet!' said I, 'thing of evil! - prophet still, if bird or devil! - Whether tempest 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.' (90)

'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 named Lenore - Clasp a rare and radiant maiden, whom the angels named Lenore? Quoth the raven, 'Nevermore.' (96)

'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.' (102)

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! (108)