

The Santa

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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 someone gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
“’Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “tapping at my chamber door –
Only this and nothing more.”

The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced through their heads;
And mamma in her kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter’s nap.

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.

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.

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.”

The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow,
Gave a luster of mid-day to objects below;

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 stillness 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.

When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer,
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be Saint Nick.

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.

He was dressed all in fur from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnish'd with ashes and soot;
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.

But Saint Nick'las still beguiling all my sad soul into smiling,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of saint and bust and door;
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous saint of yore –
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous saint of yore
Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

His eyes how they twinkled! His dimples how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry;
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow.

Then, methought the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer
Swung by angels whose faint 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 Saint Nick'las, "Nevermore."

The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke, it encirled his head like a wreath.
He had a broad face and a little round belly
That shook, when he laugh'd, like a bowl full of jelly.

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil! – prophet still, if saint 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 Saint Nick'las, "Nevermore."

A wink of his eye, and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.
He spake not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turn'd with a jerk,

“Be that word our sign of parting, saint or fiend!” I shrieked, upstarting –
“Get thee back into the tempest and the Night’s Plutonian shore!
Leave no fruitcake as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!
Leave my loneliness unbroken! – quit the bust above my door!
Take thy toys from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!”
Quoth Saint Nick’las, “Nevermore.”

And Saint Nick’las, 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!