

## **Baxter Raven Crow**

(After-poem tribute to The Raven by Edgar Allan Poe)

Once upon a midnight dreary, the December air, cold-dark-bleak, and weary.  
I wander and I wondered, why me? Why me? I think and I ponder alone in the night. Baxter Raven Crow. The wind will whisper, the wind will sit, and the wind will shiver and bite.

Alone in the night Baxter Raven Crow tossed and turned in the street, in the snow. No home, no food, no water, no mother, no father, and for these things he shall never know.

Never know will Baxter Raven Crow. A beggar is he, yet ignored, neglected, forgotten, unloved, his only pastime was to stare at his bare feet.

Time chasing, feet pacing, his eyes deep and dark, bones clear yet sharp, skeletal, and gaunt, skin; white font. Baxter Raven Crow is a twisted mind filled with woe, alone in the night.

Says Baxter Raven Crow, "I have nothing, I have none but only the shirt on my back, the trousers I bear, the unadorned jet-black persistent hair. The cuts! The holes and the tears!"

He croaked and he rattled, cricked, crackled, and babbled, though he was the only one listening, his own constant opinions were ever more his own persistent battles.

Alone in the night is Baxter Raven Crow, weak and weary, blunt, and cold, walking in dark streets the wind had blown, he shivers and groans...until he spies a sudden light, no, a sudden streak of hope beyond the unsettling snow, beyond the December cold, hopelessly hoping for the unknown.

A raven in the night sky had flown overhead to the unsuspected light, leading him forward and ahead into the night.

When he followed the raven when he ran and chased his feathered flying hope, he finds a humble home, tall, wide, and bold, he shivers at the sight, and he runs to the door without thinking and with spite.

He knocks once, he knocks twice, weakened with every try, faintly tapping, tapping at the entrance, tapping on the chamber's door.

There is no response, yet still he searches for another entrance...Searching for another floor.

He is pulled to a window ledge, he climbs vines and bricks and perks up his head, he squawks, he croaks, he caws, and groans, all the while pulling up and chafing his cracking bones.

The climb was a struggle, yet when he reaches the top, he slowly peers into the faded icy glass covered in snow-like bubbles and hears a whisper, no, quieter---a muffle.

There is an old man, pacing and sweating in the window, he talks to himself under his breath, "Lenore, Lenore?" He did this and nothing more, pacing and chafing, his eyes glued to the redwood floor.

Alone in the night is Baxter Raven Crow, but he yearns for warmth, and he still ridiculed the cold, then, he began to faintly tap on the window frame, heavily breathing all the while holding his own fragile feather-like weight.

The man inside the house pushed open the window, staring at Baxter as if he were a monster, as if he were un-whole as if he was a horror story that had never been told.

Says Baxter Raven Crow, "I wish to come in for just this single night, only for warmth at the core, and by morning I will be gone, you will see me never more."

No more alone in the night is Baxter Raven Crow. He quickly climbed inside, uninvited, and began to repeat, "I will be gone the morn, and I will be your business nevermore! Nevermore! The night haunts me, so please spare my soul! I ask you this and nothing more!"

The old man broke a cold sweat, and he paced and paced and said, "It's all in my head and nothing more; there is no gawky poor man on my redwood floor." The man looked at Baxter with his milky old eyes and said, "You bother me, child, leave me, go back to the streets from which you belong! I must return to my love, whom the angels named, Lenore."

Visions of old and an ever-still story of forgotten lore, the old man projected this and nothing more.

Baxter Raven Crow, sly and steady, approached the man and rested his hand on the weak and fearful old gentleman with a sharp focus, almost like a study.

Says Baxter Raven Crow, "You suffer, you lie, I can see it in your milky eyes--- something, no--someone, you have lost them in sickness, and it haunts you with an ever still thickness. You are like me yet aged with time...overlapping your sense of reason, giving you no hope, and slowly a sickness of the mind.

The man snapped back in terror and spite! "Prophet!" said he, "Thing of evil! Prophet still, if bird or devil! Desolate yet all undaunted on this desert land enchanted, on this home by horror haunted, tell me truly I implore, is there—is there, hope for thine lost love?! Hope for the sorrow in my doors! Yet for the lost creature the angels named Lenore. Tell me—tell me, I implore! Or leave me, leave me ever still, you unrequested heathen! You undesirable child of scorn!"

Says Baxter Raven Crow "Nevermore! Nevermore! I will leave you and I am beneath you! But my liege I only speak this, nothing but the truth! I wish only to be here one night! and then I will leave you forever more! Forevermore!"

"Leave me you devil--you beggar! You disgusting creature jet black nightmare, sly, cunning, feathered! I say leave me! Leave me! Truly I speak this and nothing more!"

The two bickered and fought, and then Mr. Raven Crow suddenly stopped in his tracks. Baxter had a memory, no a thought, he had a thought--a thought of a thought, he wonders how things get how they got?

Truly what his needs are and what are not! Yes, yes, the thought, what does he truly need and just what does he want? The old man, slipping into madness, pulling out his hair and claspng fists greatly, "Truly, he said, I will not have this!" He quickly reached for a paper-knife and made him unborn, gouging out the mouth and eyes of the child of scorn, terror, and spite.

Nevermore is ever now haunted--Baxter Raven Crow, his mouth missing and eyes unadorned, faceless pity, drenched in his own regret and emotionless feeling, heart missing, not still there, just torn.

Baxter Raven Crow rose from beneath the old man's feet, he rose with anger, a revengeful heart, and a ghastly tone from below.

Says Baxter Raven Crow, "Forevermore I will pry! And forevermore I will try, try, and try to live on my own and live until I die! Forevermore, forevermore, I will knock and knock on thy chamber door! I will haunt you and I will taunt you! Till you are ghostly and gray with your hands and knees on the floor!

Nevermore is this woman you call for. "Lenore? Lenore!" You spend your life now pacing and chasing and facing your past, but now I will ever still have my refuge, at last!" "You will rue the night you took from the weary, the night when you stole my life and left me dreary!"

The old man backed down from this child of scorn, he gathered what little strength he had and ran for his chamber door! He ran and ran! Somehow the room darkens, the ashes and embers act as his only sun. He managed to reach his existing score, yet images of terror fill his mind with memories of gore. "Lenore! Lenore! Please send me your light! Save me, take me from this haunted home! Take me from this madness! The only one I adore! This I ask and nothing more!"

Says the child of scorn, "Nevermore! Nevermore is the lost love named Lenore! Nevermore will you escape this tale of soon-to-be-forgotten lore!"

The old man never did escape that ever still moment of terror and gore, and as for Baxter the Raven, child of scorn, alone in the night, one within the snowstorm, was mutilated, neglected, underestimated, forgotten and still present, forevermore.