

## The Drunken

*A parody of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven"*

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I wandered, drunk and weary,  
Over many a quaint and dimly lit alley of forgotten doors—  
While I plodded, barely standing, suddenly I heard a chanting,  
As of someone softly ranting, ranting from the darkened doors.  
“It’s some other drunk,” I muttered, “chanting from the darkened doors—  
Only this and nothing more.”

Only vaguely I remember, for I’d been on quite a bender,  
And each alleyway I entered left me lost more than before.  
Wishing that the night weren’t over, vainly I had bought an Uber,  
Then I walked away more sober—sober for my lost liqueur—  
For the sweet and fervent ferment that the brewers name liqueur—  
Shameless here forevermore.

And the windy, winding backstreets, when I left behind the taxi,  
Filled me with bewilderment—I’d never seen those streets before!  
So that now, to get my bearings, I had stopped and stood there staring  
At my phone as I was hearing whispers from the darkened doors.  
“Just some other drunk I’m hearing whisper from the darkened doors—  
This is all and nothing more.”

Now I felt the foolish courage of the drink, and thus encouraged:  
“Asshole!” I cried out, “or Madam... show yourself now, I implore!  
Walking home and barely standing, I can hear you back there ranting  
At a whisper, almost chanting, chanting from the darkened doors—  
I can hear you sneaking back there”—and I squinted at the doors.  
Darkness there and nothing more.

In that drunken stupor, peering, I stood listening though not hearing,  
Dreaming dreams of all the sweetened whiskeys I had drunk before,  
And it was three in the morning, so the whiskey wasn’t pouring,  
But I thought I felt the warming of a sip of a liqueur.  
So I swallowed, but I tasted just the whispered word, “Liqueur!”—  
Merely this and nothing more.

Down another alley turning, all my thirsty soul was yearning,  
When I caught a glimpse of something glinting on the cobbled floor.  
“Surely,” said I, “on the cobbled pavement that must be a bottle!”  
So I stumbled and I hobbled to investigate it more—  
“Don’t be empty,” I implored as I investigated more—  
    This I said and nothing more.

Reaching down now to the pavement, I picked up a flask of fragrant  
Whiskey which was labeled “Raven” from the good ole days of yore;  
Not a moment had I waited, not a second longer wasted,  
Than I popped the lid to taste it on the street of darkened doors—  
Popped the lid and took a swig there on the street of darkened doors—  
    It was air and nothing more.

Then this fragrant bottle raising my drunk brow into amazement,  
I began to shake it and could hear the liquid that it bore.  
“Though you taste of air insipid, I can feel you’re full of liquid,”  
Said I, and I tried to sip it but it baffled me once more.  
“Tell me what the hell you are—this isn’t funny anymore!”  
    Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”

I was shocked to hear an answer from this spiritless decanter,  
Though it made no sense to me, for who had heard of that before?—  
No one else was there to hear it, but who’s heard of any spirit,  
Any brandy, beer or claret, any vodka or liqueur,  
From a label called “The Raven”?—who has heard of a liqueur  
    With a name like “Nevermore”?

But the Raven in my fingers didn’t flinch, but ever lingered,  
Speaking only that one word, as if that word were all it poured.  
Nothing more came from that cistern, not a drop and not a whimper,  
Till I scarcely more than whispered “Other flasks have drained before—  
This one likewise must have emptied, as my Hopes have drained before.”  
    Then the flask said “Nevermore.”

Startled by the words it uttered, I replied with slurs and stutters,  
“Doubtless that response must be the only draught that it can store.  
Some unhappy alcoholic must’ve felt the pain of colic  
From imbibing all the tonic which this dire bottle bore—  
Till the ballad of his Hope was but a promise that it bore:  
‘Not ever—nevermore.’”

But the Raven flask still raising all my brow into amazement,  
Now I stopped and took a seat upon the curbside in a court;  
Then, upon the concrete sinking, I abandoned hope of drinking;  
It was then I got to thinking what this teasing flask of yore—  
What this gross, ungodly, gustless, glass, and teasing flask of yore  
Meant in gasping “Nevermore.”

Thus I sat and thus I reckoned, while the ghostly bottle beckoned  
Me to take another mouthful of the aether at its core.  
This and more I speculated, though I was inebriated.  
Roadside lamps illuminated the liquescent smoke it stored—  
But the evanescent texture and the airy taste it stored,  
*I would know, ah, nevermore!*

Then I thought the stuff grew denser, as if poured from some dispenser  
Tipped by waitresses whose footfalls clicked upon the cobbled floor.  
“Sot,” I cried, “my God has meant me to imbibe this flask he sent me—  
Let it be that dear nepenthe from my memories called liqueur;  
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and retrieve my lost liqueur!”  
Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

“Sorcerer,” I said, “you tempt me!—tempt me still, if full or empty!—  
Whether someone dropped you here or you were blown here by a storm,  
More than just a mere decanter, you’re some mystical enchanter—  
With your curt and cutting candor, tell me truly, I implore—  
Is there—is there sweetened liquor?—tell me—tell me, I implore!”  
Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

“Sorcerer,” I said, “you tempt me!—tempt me still, if full or empty!—  
By that god of grapes and wine who makes us merry on the floor—  
Tell this thirsty, drunken heathen if, within the distant Eden,  
He again shall ever even sip the potion called liqueur—  
Sip the sweet and potent potion of ambrosia called liqueur.”  
Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

“By that word may you be shattered, flask or fiend!” I shrieked, now madder—  
“Go on back to where you came from, whether Hell or other shores!  
Leave me no deceptive omen! Leave behind your airy potion!  
Leave my wretched thirst unbroken!—break yourself upon the floor!  
Take your opening from my mouth, and smash yourself upon the floor!”  
Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

And the Raven, always tempting, still is empty, *still* is empty—  
In my fingers’ desperate grip as desperation grips my core;  
And that bottle has the seeming of a vessel that is teeming,  
Full of alcohol and gleaming like a golden sweet liqueur;  
And my soul within that bottle that lies floating in liqueur  
Shall imbibe it—nevermore!