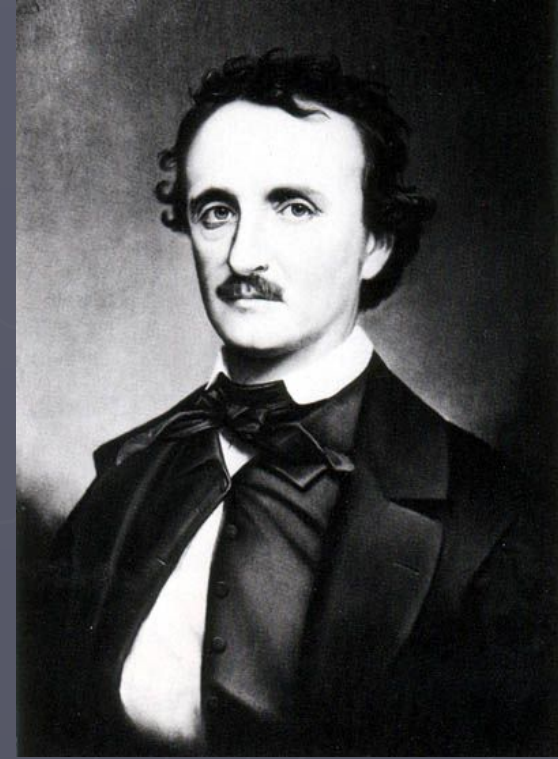


# Edgar Allan Poe



-----by 周燕

From class 5

You have to wonder where some authors get their ideas or how their work relates to their own life, but you don't have to wonder with Edgar Allan Poe.

- Early life and career

Life and career

- Military career

- Publishing career

Death

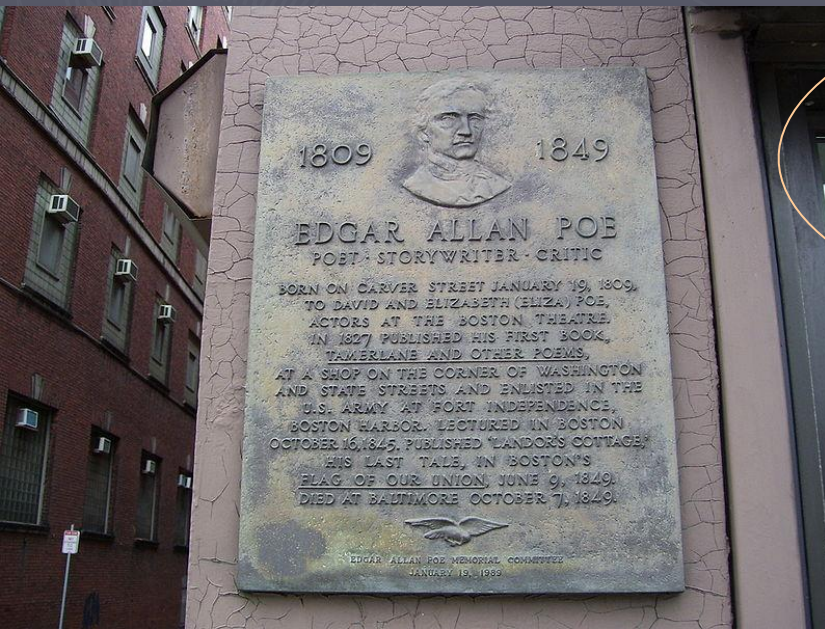
Literary style and themes

Legacy



# Early Life

Poe born on January 19, 1809, in Boston, Massachusetts. His mother, Elizabeth Arnold Poe, was a talented actress from an English theatrical family. Because Poe's father, David Poe, Jr., a traveling actor of Irish descent, was neither talented nor responsible, the family suffered financially. After apparently separating from David Poe, Elizabeth died in Richmond, Virginia, in 1811. The young Edgar, though not legally adopted, was taken in by a wealthy Scottish tobacco exporter, John Allan, from whom Poe took his middle name.



This plaque marks the approximate location where Edgar Poe was born in Boston.

1820 Poe moved back with the Allans to Richmond, Virginia

He may have become engaged to [Sarah Elmira Royster](#).

1826 He entered University of Virginia in February to study languages

During his time there, Poe lost touch with Royster and also became estranged from his foster father over gambling debts.

1827 Poe gave up on the university after a year, he traveled to Boston in April, sustaining himself with odd jobs as a clerk and newspaper writer.

## Military career

1827 Unable to support himself, on May 27, Poe enlisted in the United States Army as a private. Using the name "**Edgar A. Perry**", he claimed he was 22 years old even though he was 18.

That same year, he released his first book, a 40-page collection of poetry, *Tamerlane and Other Poems*.

1829 He served two years and then got himself dismissed by court martial.

Poe accepted an appointment to West Point, which Allan had helped to arrange.

Before entering West Point, Poe moved back to Baltimore for a time, to stay with his widowed aunt Maria Clemm.

his second book, *Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane and Minor Poems*, in Baltimore in 1829 .

1831 Poe was discharged

He left for New York in February , and released a third volume of poems, simply titled *Poems*.

1831 He returned to Baltimore, to his aunt, brother and cousin, in March.



Poe was first stationed at Boston's Fort Independence while in the army.

# Publishing career

- Poe began more earnest attempts to start his career as a writer .
- After his early attempts at poetry, Poe had turned his attention to prose and only drama *Politian*
- 1835 The short story *MS. Found in a Bottle* made Poe become assistant editor of the periodical in August , however, within a few weeks, he was discharged after being found drunk repeatedly.
- 1835 Returning to Baltimore, Poe secretly married Virginia, his cousin, on September 22
- 1836 Poe went back to Richmond with Virginia. On May 16, he had a second wedding ceremony in Richmond with Virginia Clemm, this time in public

Since 1839 Poe published numerous articles, stories, and reviews, enhancing his reputation as a trenchant critic. He had worked as an assistant editor, a government post . Then he returned to New York, where he worked as an editor.

1845 On January 29, his poem *The Raven* appeared in the **Evening Mirror** and became a popular sensation. It made Poe a household name almost instantly.

1846 Poe moved to a cottage in the Fordham section of The Bronx, New York  
Virginia died there on January 30, 1847.

Shortly after Virginia's death, Poe courted several other women including his childhood sweetheart, Sarah Elmira Royster. But all had no results.

**Poe Cottage**





## Death

On October 3, 1849, Poe was found on the streets of Baltimore delirious, "in great distress, and... in need of immediate assistance", according to the man who found him, Joseph W. Walker. He was taken to the Washington College Hospital, where he died on Sunday, October 7, 1849, at 5:00 in the morning



Edgar Allan Poe is buried in Baltimore, Maryland. The circumstances and cause of his death remain uncertain.

You have to wonder where some authors get their ideas or how their work relates to their own life, but you don't have to wonder with Edgar Allan Poe.

Poe's father abandoned the family

his mother died when he was very young

his foster father, John Allen, erratically swung between lenience and extreme discipline

Poe married his much younger cousin Virginia who died at an early age

.....

Is it any wonder, then, that Poe's work focused on the macabre, the bizarre, and the outcast?

No. The wonder is that he found a way to make such striking art from his suffering.

# Literary style and themes

## Genres

Poe's best known fiction works are **Gothic**, a genre he followed to appease the public taste. His most recurring themes deal with questions of death, including its physical signs, the effects of decomposition, concerns of premature burial, the reanimation of the dead, and mourning. Many of his works are generally considered part of the **dark romanticism** genre, a literary reaction to transcendentalism, which Poe strongly disliked. Beyond horror, Poe also wrote satires, humor tales, and hoaxes. For comic effect, he used irony and ludicrous extravagance, often in an attempt to liberate the reader from cultural conformity. Poe also reinvented science fiction, responding in his writing to emerging technologies such as hot air balloons in "The Balloon-Hoax".

**Gothic fiction** 哥特式小说(sometimes referred to as **Gothic horror**) is a genre of literature that combines elements of both horror and romance. As a genre, it is generally believed to have been invented by the English author Horace Walpole, with his 1764 novel *The Castle of Otranto*

**Dark romanticism** is a literary subgenre that emerged from the Transcendental philosophical movement popular in nineteenth-century America. Works in the dark romantic spirit were influenced by Transcendentalism, but did not entirely embrace the ideas of Transcendentalism

## Literary theory

Poe's writing reflects his literary theories, which he presented in his criticism and also in essays such as *The Poetic Principle*. He disliked didacticism and allegory, though he believed that **meaning in literature should be an undercurrent just beneath the surface**. Works with obvious meanings, he wrote, cease to be art. He believed that quality work should be brief and focus on a specific single effect. To that end, he believed that the writer should carefully calculate every sentiment and idea. In "The Philosophy of Composition", an essay in which Poe describes his method in writing *The Raven*, he claims to have strictly followed this method.





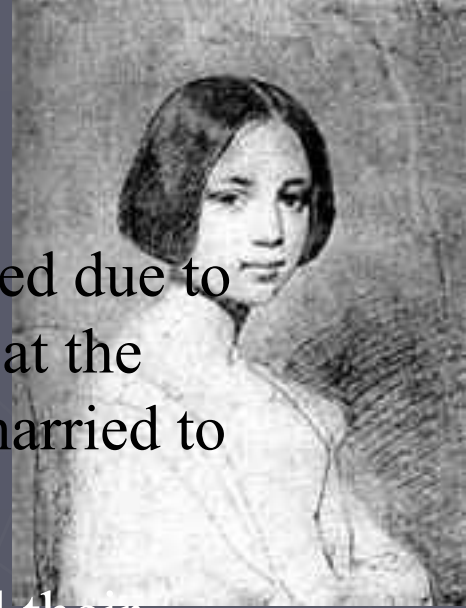
**Sarah Elmira Royster Shelton** (1810 - 1888) was a childhood sweetheart of Edgar Allan Poe.

Their early relationship, begun when she was 15, ended due to the interference of her father while Poe was studying at the University of Virginia. A couple years later, she got married to another man.

Poe came back into her life in 1848 and they renewed their relationship. Poe pressed her into marrying him, though she was hesitant and her children did not approve. They never married; he died shortly thereafter in October 1849.

Royster had an influence on Poe's work and may have inspired *The Raven* and *Annabel Lee*. The early relationship between Poe and Shelton was immortalized by other writers, including Poe's brother William Henry Leonard Poe.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarah\\_Elmira\\_Royster](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarah_Elmira_Royster)



## Virginia Eliza Clemm Poe

(born **Virginia Eliza Clemm**) (August 22, 1822 – January 30, 1847) was the wife of Edgar Allan Poe. The couple were first cousins and married when Virginia Clemm was 13 and Poe was 27. Some biographers have suggested that the couple's relationship was more like that between brother and sister than like husband and wife and that they never consummated their marriage. Beginning in January 1842, she struggled with tuberculosis for several years. She died of the disease in January 1847 at the age of 24 in the family's cottage outside New York City.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia\\_Eliza\\_Clemm\\_Poe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Eliza_Clemm_Poe)

Virginia Eliza Clemm Poe



Virginia Poe, as painted after her death

<b>Born</b>	August 22, 1822 <a href="#">Baltimore, Maryland</a>
<b>Died</b>	January 30, 1847 (aged 24) <a href="#">Fordham, Bronx, New York</a>
<b>Spouse(s)</b>	<a href="#">Edgar Allan Poe</a>



Virginia's death had a significant impact on Poe. After her death, Poe was deeply saddened for several months.

Many of Poe's works are interpreted autobiographically, with much of his work believed to reflect Virginia's long struggle with tuberculosis and her eventual death. The most discussed example is "Annabel Lee". This poem, which depicts a dead young bride and her mourning lover, is often assumed to have been inspired by Virginia, though other women in Poe's life are potential candidates including Frances Sargent Osgood and Sarah Helen Whitman. A similar poem, "Ulalume", is also believed to be a memorial tribute to Virginia, as is "Lenore", whose title character is described as "the most lovely dead that ever died so young!"



**Virginia Poe endured the latter part of her illness at the Poe Cottage in the Bronx, New York. Her bedroom is preserved there.**

