

1849

THE BELLS

Edgar Allan Poe

Poe, Edgar Allan (1809-49) - American poet, short-story writer, and critic who is best known for his tales of ratiocination, his fantastical horror stories, and his genre-founding detective stories. Poe, whose cloudy personal life is a virtual legend, considered himself primarily a poet. Bells (1849) - One of Poe's more popular poems, it is noted for its musical lyrics and jingling tone. Opening lines: Hear the sledges with the bells- / Silver bells! ...

THE BELLS

I Hear the sledges with the bells
Silver bells!
What a world of merriment their melody foretells!
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, In the icy air of night!
While the stars that oversprinkle All the heavens, seem to twinkle With a crystalline delight;
Keeping time, time, time, In a sort of Runic rhyme, To the tintinnabulation that so musically wells
From the bells, bells, bells, bells, Bells, bells, bells
From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

II Hear the mellow wedding bells, Golden bells!
What a world of happiness their harmony foretells!
Through the balmy air of night How they ring out their delight!
From the molten-golden notes, And an in tune, What a liquid ditty floats To the turtle-dove that listens, while she gloats On the moon!

Oh, from out the sounding cells, What a gush of euphony voluminously wells!

How it swells!

How it dwells On the Future! how it tells Of the rapture that impels To the swinging and the ringing
Of the bells, bells, bells, Of the bells, bells, bells, bells, Bells, bells, bells
To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells!

III Hear the loud alarum bells
Brazen bells!
What a tale of terror, now, their turbulency tells!
In the startled ear of night How they scream out their affright!
Too much horrified to speak, They can only shriek, shriek, Out of tune, In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of the fire, In a mad expostulation with the deaf and frantic fire,
Leaping higher, higher, higher, With a desperate desire, And a resolute endeavor, Now- now to sit or never, By the side of the pale-faced moon.

Oh, the bells, bells, bells!
What a tale their terror tells Of Despair!
How they clang, and clash, and roar!
What a horror they outpour On the bosom of the palpitating air!
Yet the ear it fully knows, By the twanging, And the clanging, How the danger ebbs and flows:
Yet the ear distinctly tells, In the jangling, And the wrangling, How the danger sinks and swells,
By the sinking or the swelling in the anger of the bells
Of the bells
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells, Bells, bells, bells
In the clamor and the clangor of the bells!

IV Hear the tolling of the bells
Iron Bells!
What a world of solemn thought their monody compels!
In the silence of the night, How we shiver with affright At the melancholy menace of their tone!

For every sound that floats From the rust within their throats Is a groan.
And the people- ah, the people They that dwell up in the steeple, All Alone And who,
tolling, tolling, tolling, In that muffled monotone, Feel a glory in so rolling On the
human heart a stone They are neither man nor woman They are neither brute nor
human They are Ghouls: And their king it is who tolls; And he rolls, rolls, rolls, Rolls A paean from
the bells!

And his merry bosom swells With the paean of the bells!

And he dances, and he yells; Keeping time, time, time, In a sort of Runic rhyme, To the
paean of the bells Of the bells: Keeping time, time, time, In a sort of Runic rhyme, To
the throbbing of the bells Of the bells, bells, bells To the sobbing of the bells; Keeping
time, time, time, As he knells, knells, knells, In a happy Runic rhyme, To the rolling of
the bells Of the bells, bells, bells: To the tolling of the bells, Of the bells, bells, bells,
bells Bells, bells, bells To the moaning and the groaning of the bells.

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- **THE END-**