

1829

TO ____

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. To__ (1829) - One of Poe's poems.

Opening lines: Not long ago the writer of these lines, / In the mad pride of intellectuality, ...

To ____

Not long ago, the writer of these lines,
 In the mad pride of intellectuality,
 Maintained "the power of words"- denied that ever
 A thought arose within the human brain
 Beyond the utterance of the human tongue:
 And now, as if in mockery of that boast,
 Two words- two foreign soft dissyllables
 Italian tones, made only to be murmured
 By angels dreaming in the moonlit "dew
 That hangs like chains of pearl on Hermon hill,"
 Have stirred from out the abysses of his heart,
 Unthought-like thoughts that are the souls of thought,
 Richer, far wilder, far diviner visions
 Than even seraph harper, Israfael,
 (Who has "the sweetest voice of all God's creatures,")
 Could hope to utter. And I! my spells are broken.
 The pen falls powerless from my shivering hand.
 With thy dear name as text, though bidden by thee,
 I cannot write- I cannot speak or think-
 Alas, I cannot feel; for 'tis not feeling,
 This standing motionless upon the golden
 Threshold of the wide-open gate of dreams.
 Gazing, entranced, adown the gorgeous vista,
 And thrilling as I see, upon the right,
 Upon the left, and all the way along,
 Amid empurpled vapors, far away
 To where the prospect terminates- thee only.

THE END