



CLASSICS
ILLUSTRATED


Edgar Allan
POE

the
RAVEN

and Other Poems

illustrated by

GAHAN WILSON

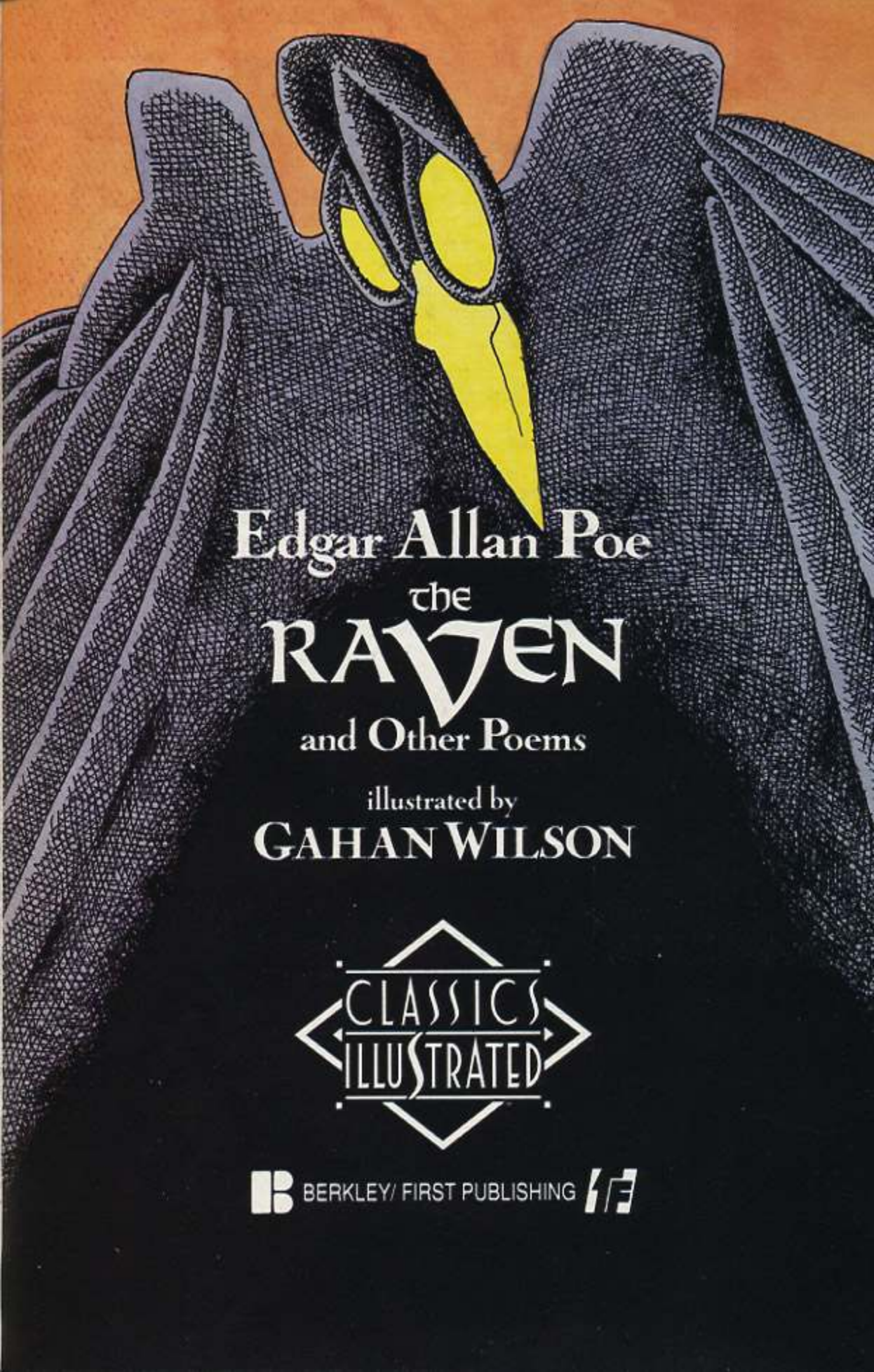
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Gahan Wilson

C **LASSICS ILLUSTRATED** are adaptations of the world's greatest works of literature, produced by some of the world's most talented writers and artists. Each lavishly illustrated volume is an accurate representation of the original work — distinctive, fresh and innovative, yet faithful to the book and true to the intentions of the author.

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W hile they stand on their own merits, **CLASSICS ILLUSTRATED** are not substitutes for the originals. Rather, they are artistic interpretations, perfect introductions to an exciting world of remarkable ideas and unlimited possibilities — the world of great literature.

A detailed illustration of a raven's head, rendered in a dark, textured style. The raven is wearing a dark, hooded garment that frames its face. Its eyes are a bright, glowing yellow, and its beak is also yellow, pointing downwards. The background is a solid, warm orange-brown color.

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Masterpieces of the macabre,
these elegant poems — drawn

from the most fertile period in Edgar Allan Poe's life — delve the dark depths of the subconscious and trace the hidden horrors of the human soul. Never before and rarely since has a writer captured so completely the melancholy, the torment, the passion, the grotesque humor and the suspense that is inherent in the battle between human good and evil, between the rational and the irrational. With his contemporary, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Poe was a founder of the American Gothic movement that blossomed before the Civil War. Poe used his own tortured life as an inspiration for his writing, the first volumes of which appeared in 1831. In 1844, following bouts with poverty, alcoholism, and romantic and professional failures, he produced the eerie poem **The Raven** for the New York *Evening News*. The popularity of that poem briefly propelled Poe into the literary spotlight. For the most part, though, he was criticized, demeaned and condemned as a lunatic and literary fake: "the jingle man," Ralph Waldo Emerson huffed, dismissing Poe's works as all style and little substance. Only after his death was Poe recognized as a stylistic innovator and a master of language and narrative. Later reassessments lauded Poe for his consistent command of mood, emotion and atmosphere; he was, judged William Yeats, "always and for all lands a great lyric poet." Not only are these fascinating poems among the world's best-loved and most widely read, but they have influenced several generations of writers. Haunting, beautiful, full of rhythm and melody, Poe's forms, techniques and theories inspired the post-Civil War American Bohemian writers, the French Symbolists, and were also later echoed in the works of such writers as T.S. Eliot and William Faulkner.

The Raven and Other Poems
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THE RAVEN

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore—
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
"Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door—
Only this and nothing more."



Ah, distinctly I remember, it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow;— vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow— sorrow for the lost Lenore—
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels named Lenore—
Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me— filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating:
"Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door—
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door;
This it is and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
"Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you"— here I opened wide the door;—
Darkness there and nothing more.

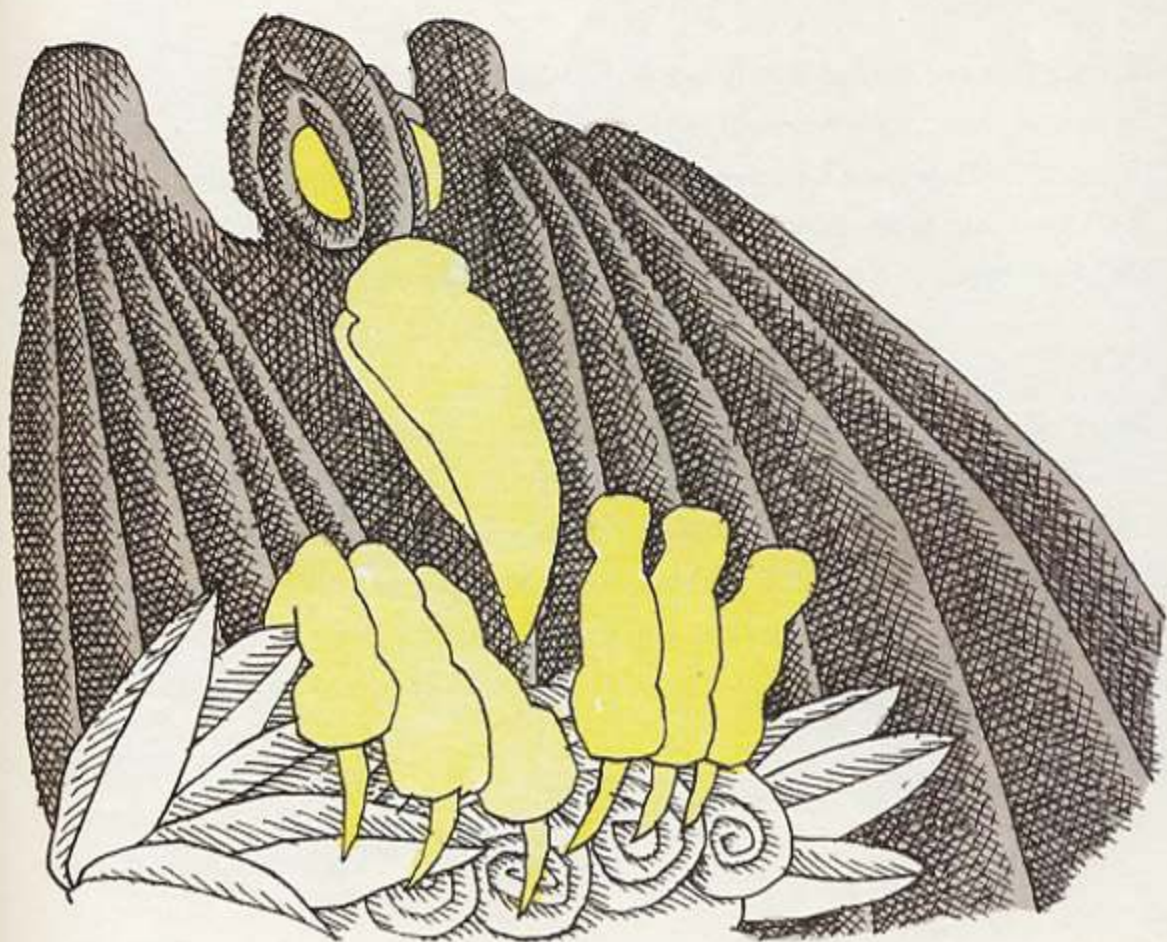
Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals ever dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore!"
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, "Lenore!"—
Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping something louder than before.
"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window lattice;
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore—
Let my heart be still a moment, and this mystery explore;—

'Tis the wind and nothing more."

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore.
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he,
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door—
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door—

Perched, and sat, and nothing more.



Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,
"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore—
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!"

Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning— little relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door—
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,

With such name as "Nevermore."

But the Raven, sitting lonely on that placid bust, spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
Nothing farther then he uttered; not a feather then he fluttered—
Till I scarcely more than muttered: "Other friends have flown before—
On the morrow he will leave me as my Hopes have flown before."

Then the bird said, "Nevermore."

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
"Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and store,
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore—
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore

Of 'Never— nevermore.'"