

0. POE and HIS WRITINGS - Story Preface

1. "CHILDHOOD'S HOUR"

2. ORDER and CHAOS

3. POE FALLS in LOVE

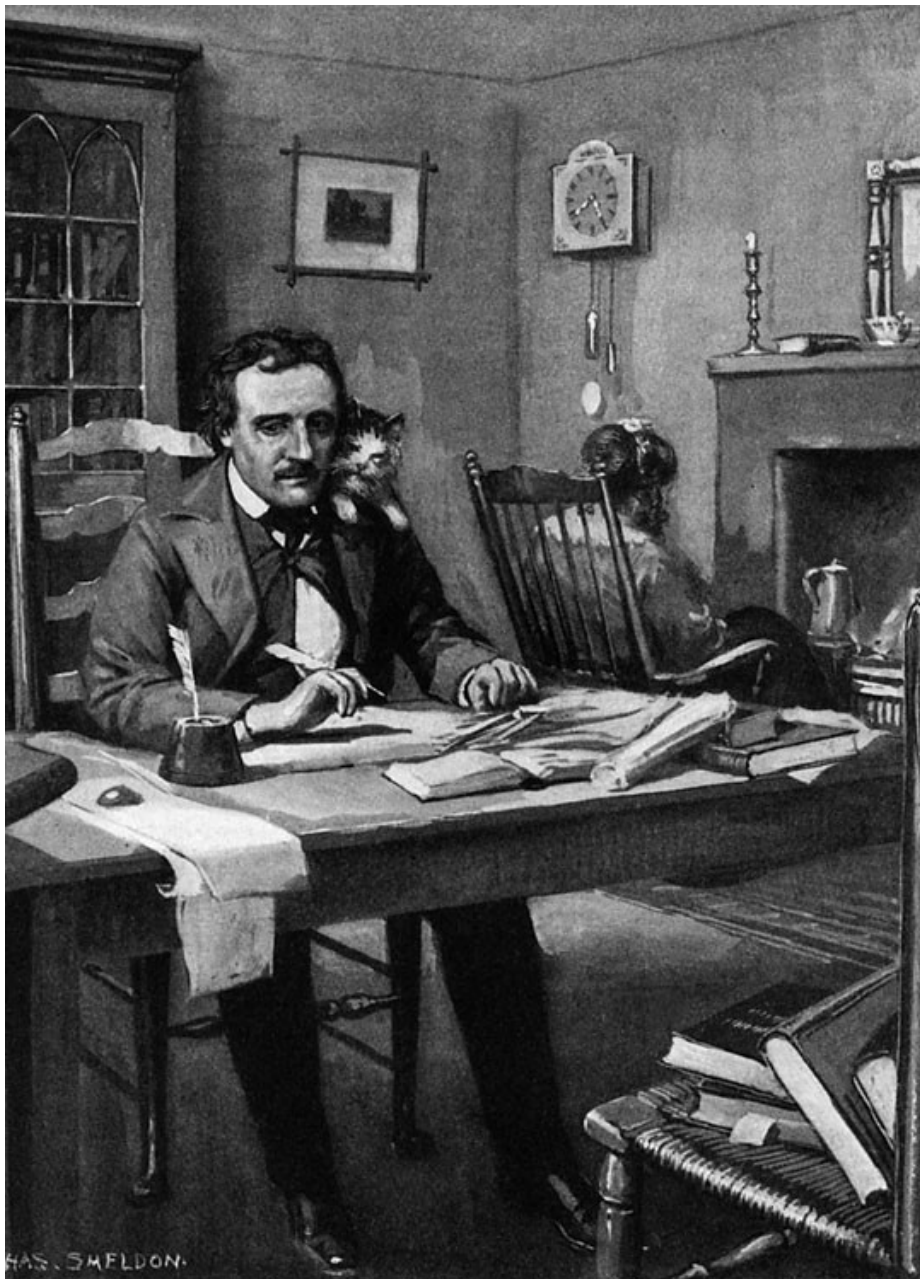
**4. POE and HIS WRITINGS**

5. "THE RAVEN"

6. ANNABEL LEE

7. COOPING and the FINAL MYSTERY

8. RUFUS GRISWOLD and POE'S LEGACY



This drawing, depicting Poe with his cat (Catterina) and his wife (in front of the fireplace) is by Chas. Sheldon. It was used, among other things, to illustrate a book cover for *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, published by T.Y. Crowell & Co. (in 1902).

By all accounts, Poe and Virginia adored each other. He taught her algebra; she sang to him. They played games together; he tried to support a three-person family.

Finances were a constant struggle. Even Maria Clemm - the third member of Poe's household - tried to find work.

Beyond his life as a critic, Poe was writing fiction. He launched the detective-story genre when he wrote *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (featuring mystery-solver C. Auguste Dupin). It was published, in *Graham's Magazine*, during 1841.

No respecter of victims, Poe's pen killed-off young and old alike:

*... The daughter lay prostrate and motionless; she had swooned. The screams and struggles of the old lady (during which the hair was torn from her head) had the effect of changing the probably pacific purposes of the [murderer] into those of wrath ... Conscious of having deserved punishment, it seemed desirous of concealing its bloody deeds, and skipped about the chamber in an agony of nervous agitation ... it seized first the corpse of the daughter, and thrust it up the chimney, as it was found; then that of the old lady, which it immediately hurled through the window headlong.*  
(Excerpt from *Rue Morgue*, by Edgar Allan Poe, 1841.)

He also ended the lives of males and females in stories like *The Masque of the Red Death* in which the host of a ball - Prince Prospero - fails to survive his own grand party. Perhaps Poe was thinking of the blood of a tuberculosis victim when he wrote these words:

*And now was acknowledged the presence of the Red Death. He had come like a thief in the night. And one by one dropped the revellers in the blood-bedewed halls of their revel, and died each in the despairing posture of his fall ... And Darkness and Decay and the Red Death held illimitable dominion over all.* (Excerpt from *The Masque of the Red Death*, by Poe, 1842.)

Then ... the blood of Poe's fiction began to mix with the blood of Poe's real life.

One day in 1842, while Virginia was singing and playing her piano, she coughed-up blood. In light of what he'd been through with his mother - and with Fanny Allan - Poe must have instantly worried about "consumption." Virginia did, in fact, have tuberculosis.

Her symptoms varied widely. Sometimes she was wretchedly ill; other times she seemed unaffected. For Poe, who watched his wife struggle for five years, the sorrow must have been overwhelming.

Writing at home, where his wife was dying, Poe knew that one day he would lose her, too. We can sense the looming loss in some of his works - like "The Raven."

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/POE-and-HIS-WRITINGS-The-Raven>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/POE-and-HIS-WRITINGS-The-Raven>

## Questions 2 Ponder

### Who Wrote the First Detective Novel?

Beyond his life as a literary critic, Poe was writing fiction. He launched the detective-story genre when he wrote *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (featuring mystery-solver C. Auguste Dupin). He published the story in *Graham's Magazine*, during 1841.

Tuberculosis, which had already impacted Poe's life as a child, returned in 1842 when it struck his wife, Virginia. She was ill, with the dreaded "consumption" for five years. Poe, writing at home, observed her struggles.

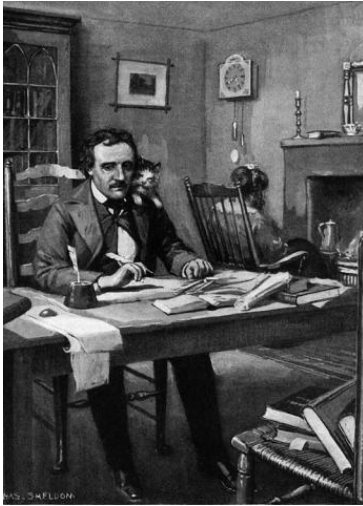
During the time that Virginia was sick, Poe kept writing. In 1842, he wrote "The Masque of the Red Death."

Do you think there was something about Poe, or his life circumstances, which caused him to invent the detective novel? If so, what would it be?

When he wrote "The Masque of the Red Death," Poe might have been thinking about tuberculosis and its blood-producing cough. If not, what would the "Red Death" signify?

Poe writes that the "Red Death" came "like a thief in the night." He also talks about "Darkness and Decay." Do those clues help to determine whether he is calling tuberculosis the "Red Death" which leads to "Darkness and Decay?"

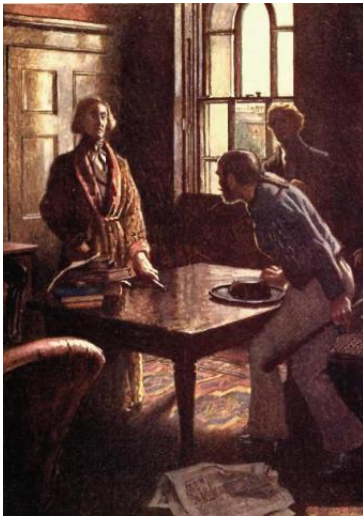
Would the physical presence of a very ill person, whom you deeply love, help or harm your writing (if you lived in the same home)? Explain your position.



### Edgar Allan Poe at Work

Image online, courtesy Poe Museum.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Edgar-Allan-Poe-at-Work>



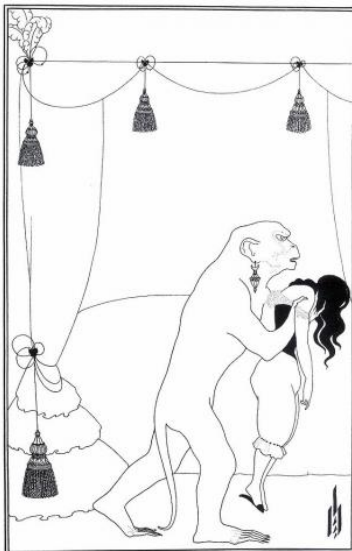
### Rue Morgue - C. Auguste Dupin

Illustration of C. Auguste Dupin - a character in Poe's story, *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* - by Byam Shaw. The image first appeared in "Selected Tales of Mystery, by Edgar Allan Poe" - a richly illustrated book published in London by Sidgwick & Jackson (in 1909) - facing page 284.

The original caption for the illustration: "The sailor's face flushed up; he started to his feet and grasped his cudgel."

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### Murderer - Rue Morgue

Image illustrating Poe's story - *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* - by Aubrey Beardsley, online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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### Consumption - Tuberculosis and How It Spreads

Clip from "Goodbye Mr. Germ," produced in 1940 by the National Tuberculosis Association, online courtesy Internet Archive.

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