

## **The Raven**

**OR, A Christmas Tale told by a School-boy to His Little Brothers and Sisters.**

**by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1798)**

Underneath an old oak tree  
There was of swine a huge company  
That grunted as they crunched the mast:  
For that was ripe, and fell full fast.  
Then they trotted away, for the wind grew high:  
One acorn they left, and no more might you spy.  
Next came a Raven, that liked not such folly:  
He belonged, they did say, to the witch Melancholy!  
Blacker was he than blackest jet,  
Flew low in the rain, and his feathers not wet.  
He picked up the acorn and buried it straight  
By the side of a river both deep and great.  
Where then did the Raven Go?  
He went high and low,  
Over hill, over dale, did the black Raven go.  
Many Autumns, many Springs  
Travelled he with wandering wings:  
Many summers, many Winters—  
I can't tell half his adventures.  
At length he came back, and with him a She  
And the acorn was grown to a tall oak tree.  
They built them a nest in the topmost bough,  
And young ones they had, and were happy enow.  
But soon came a Woodman in leathern guise,  
His brow, like a pent-house, hung over his eyes.

He'd an axe in his hand, not a word he spoke,  
But with many a hem! and a sturdy stroke,  
At length he brought down the poor Raven's own oak.  
His young ones were killed; for they could not depart,  
And their mother did die of a broken heart.  
The boughs from the trunk the woodman did sever;  
And they floated it down on the course of the river.  
They sawed it in planks, and its bark they did strip,  
And with this tree and others they made a good ship.  
The ship, it was launched; but in sight of the land  
Such a storm there did rise as no ship would withstand.  
It bulged on a rock, and the waves rush'd in fast;  
Round and round flew the Raven, and cawed to the blast.  
He heard the last shriek of the perishing souls—  
See! see! o'er the topmast the mad water rolls!  
Right glad was the Raven, and off he went fleet,  
And Death riding home on a cloud he did meet,  
And he thank'd him again and again for this treat:  
They had taken his all, and REVENGE IT WAS SWEET! \*