

Edgar Allan Poe was born January 19, 1809, in Boston, Massachusetts. The Book of Knowledge published by the Grolier Society in 1911, calls his poetry, “strange” and “weird.” The forty years of his life were marked by tragedies and heartache. His parents died when he was a child. He struggled with drinking throughout his life. He held many jobs but struggled to find financial stability. Like any writer, his work was often rejected. He is perhaps best remembered for his poem “The Raven” which was published in 1845.

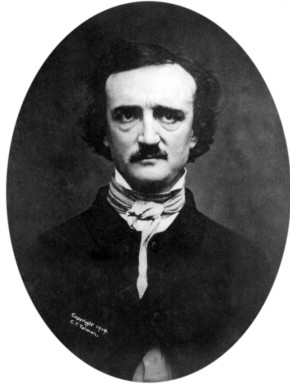
But did Edgar Allan Poe write anything that did not have a dark twist to it? The answer may surprise you. One of his lighter pieces is called “The Balloon Hoax.” He published it in the *New York Sun* in 1844. It appeared in the paper to be an actual news story, but it was purely a work of fiction. In this article, Poe describes the first purported trans-Atlantic flight in a balloon. Much of the article is recounted as if from actual journal entries made by the balloon’s passengers. The detail with which he describes this flight is remarkable. What follows is just an excerpt of this article (originally over 5,000 words in length). Keep in mind when you read this that the Wright Brothers would not fly at Kitty Hawk for another fifty-nine years.

The great problem is at length solved. The air, as well as the earth and the ocean, has been subdued by science, and will become a common and convenient highway for mankind. The Atlantic has been actually crossed in a Balloon; and this too without difficulty—without any great apparent danger—with thorough control of the machine—and in the inconceivably brief period of seventy-five hours from shore to shore! By the energy of an agent at Charleston, S.C., we are enabled to be the first to furnish the public with a detailed account of this most extraordinary voyage . . .

Every preparation likely to embarrass us, having been made over night, we commenced the inflation this morning at daybreak; but owing to a thick fog, which encumbered the folds of the silk and rendered it unmanageable, we did not get through before nearly eleven o'clock. Cut loose, then, in high spirits, and rose gently but steadily, with a light breeze at North, which bore us in the direction of the Bristol Channel. Found the ascending force greater than we had expected; and as we arose higher and so got clear of the cliffs, and more in the sun's rays, our ascent became very rapid. I did not wish, however, to lose gas at so early a period of the adventure, and so concluded to ascend for the present . . .

This is unquestionably the most stupendous, the most interesting, and the most important undertaking, ever accomplished or even attempted by man. What magnificent events may ensue, it would be useless now to think of determining.

On the following pages you will find a timeline of Edgar Allan Poe’s life and a notebooking page. Do some research into the life and work of Edgar Allan Poe and record your observations as you look more closely at the life of this famous author. For printable timeline cards to accompany your study, visit WriteBonnieRose.com.



Edgar Allan Poe

Timeline

| | |
|---------------------------|------|
| Edgar Allan Poe was born. | 1809 |
| | 1811 |
| | 1831 |
| 1835 | |
| | 1839 |
| 1843 | |
| | 1844 |
| 1845 | |
| | 1846 |
| 1847 | |
| | 1849 |

Poe published "The Pit and the Pendulum" and "The Tell-Tale Heart."

Mother Elizabeth Poe died.

Poe took a job as editor of the newspaper the *Southern Literary Messenger*.

Poe died.

Poe published "The Great Balloon Hoax."

Poe published "The Raven."

Poe went to New York City and had some poetry published.

Poe's wife Virginia died.

Poe published *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*, a collection of short stories.

Poe published "The Cask of Amontillado."

Answer Key

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