

Annabel Lee – Edgar Allan Poe

It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of Annabel Lee; —
And this maiden she lived with no other thought 5
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and *she* was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea;
But we loved with a love that was more than love — 10
I and my Annabel Lee —
With a love that the wingéd seraphs in Heaven
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling 15
My beautiful Annabel Lee;
So that her high-born kinsmen came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre,
In this kingdom by the sea. 20

The angels, not half so happy in Heaven,
Went envying her and me —
Yes! — that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night, 25
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
Of those who were older than we —
Of many far wiser than we — 30
And neither the angels in Heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee: —

For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee; 35
And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee: —
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling — my darling — my life and my bride,
In her sepulchre there by the sea — 40
In her tomb by the sounding sea.

Study and Analysis Questions

1. How do the opening lines of the poem evoke a “fairy-tale” tone?
2. How do lines 7, and lines 27-29 reflect the reality of the relationship between Edgar Allan Poe and his wife, Virginia? Why might Poe feel the need to justify his love for Virginia?
3. What romanticized explanation does the speaker give for the death of his love, Annabel Lee?
4. In line 15, what might the “wind” represent in Poe’s life? How does the fact that Annabel Lee does not die until line 26 represent the reality of Virginia Poe’s death?
5. How would you describe the overall tone of the poem? How does the rhythm of the poem affect the tone?