

# Edgar Allan Poe, His Tomb

by [Peter Dreyer](#) (August 2023)



Stéphane Mallarmé as Pan, published in *Les hommes d'aujourd'hui*, 1887

*Imitation apropos of Stéphane Mallarmé's "Le Tombeau  
d'Edgar Poe"*

**The poet's bare** blade bestirring a century  
mortified never to have grasped that death  
triumphed in his strange, inimitable voice  
eternity at last made him himself.

An angel purifying our tribal speech,  
back in the day, critics swaggered out loud,  
vaunting the ebullient potion swallowed  
with their unworthy draft of bitter swill.

If admiration sculpt no bas-relief  
to adorn his confirming monument,  
why, earth and heaven are, alas, at odds,

but this calm slab, placed by fatality  
here, constitutes henceforth a stony hinge  
on sacrilege's future sallies' disdain.

*Tel, qu'en Lui même enfin l'éternité le change,*  
died in Bawlmer—"congestion of the brain." \*

\*Poe, who died in 1849 at the age of forty, probably of rabies, is buried in Westminster Cemetery, 519 West Fayette Street (at North Greene Street), Baltimore. In the 1957 University of California Press bilingual edition of Stéphane Mallarmé's selected poems, C. F. MacIntyre translates the original line I reproduce here as: "Such as into Himself Eternity at last changes / him." Mallarmé gushed that Poe was like "un aérolithe [meteorite]; stellaire ... très loin de nous contemporinement" ("Edgar Poe," *Divagations* [1897]). Embracing a myth they themselves had helped create, he and

Baudelaire failed to notice that Poe was actually a truly godawful poet, something that had not escaped American writers like Emerson (who dismissed him as a “jingle man”) and Henry James. Rather similarly, Jerry Lewis is regarded by some French film critics as a revolutionary cinematic genius. Here, however, we are deep into sacred cow territory.—P.D.

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