

The Bells by Edgar Allan Poe (Published 1849)

I.

HEAR the sledges with the bells --
Silver bells !
What a world of merriment their melody
foretells !
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
In the icy air of night !
While the stars that oversprinkle
All the heavens, seem to twinkle
With a crystalline delight ;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the tintinnabulation that so musically
wells
From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells --
From the jingling and the tinkling of the
bells.

II.

Hear the mellow wedding bells
Golden bells!
What a world of happiness their harmony
foretells !
Through the balmy air of night
How they ring out their delight !
From the molten-golden notes,
And all in tune,
What a liquid ditty floats
To the turtle-dove that listens, while she
gloats
On the moon !
Oh, from out the sounding cells,
What a gush of euphony voluminously wells
!
How it swells !
How it dwells
On the Future ! how it tells
Of the rapture that impels

To the swinging and the ringing
Of the bells, bells, bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells --
To the rhyming and the chiming of the
bells !

III.

Hear the loud alarum bells --
Brazen bells !
What tale of terror, now, their turbulency
tells !
In the startled ear of night
How they scream out their affright !
Too much horrified to speak,
They can only shriek, shriek,
Out of tune,
In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of
the fire,
In a mad expostulation with the deaf and
frantic fire,
Leaping higher, higher, higher,
With a desperate desire,
And a resolute endeavor
Now -- now to sit or never,
By the side of the pale-faced moon.
Oh, the bells, bells, bells !
What a tale their terror tells
Of Despair !
How they clang, and clash, and roar !
What a horror they outpour
On the bosom of the palpitating air !
Yet the ear, it fully knows,
By the twanging,
And the clanging,
How the danger ebbs and flows ;
Yet, the ear distinctly tells,
In the jangling,
And the wrangling,
How the danger sinks and swells,

By the sinking or the swelling in the anger of
the bells --

Of the bells --

Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,

Bells, bells, bells --

In the clamour and the clangour of the
bells !

IV.

Hear the tolling of the bells --

Iron bells !

What a world of solemn thought their
monody compels !

In the silence of the night,

How we shiver with affright

At the melancholy meaning of their tone !

For every sound that floats

From the rust within their throats

Is a groan.

And the people -- ah, the people --

They that dwell up in the steeple,

All alone,

And who, tolling, tolling, tolling,

In that muffled monotone,

Feel a glory in so rolling

On the human heart a stone --

They are neither man nor woman --

They are neither brute nor human --

They are Ghouls: --

And their king it is who tolls ;

And he rolls, rolls, rolls, rolls,

Rolls

A pæan from the bells !

And his merry bosom swells

With the pæan of the bells !

And he dances, and he yells ;

Keeping time, time, time,

In a sort of Runic rhyme,

To the pæan of the bells --

Of the bells :

Keeping time, time, time,

In a sort of Runic rhyme,

To the throbbing of the bells --

Of the bells, bells, bells --

To the sobbing of the bells ;

Keeping time, time, time,

As he knells, knells, knells,

In a happy Runic rhyme,

To the rolling of the bells --

Of the bells, bells, bells --

To the tolling of the bells,

Of the bells, bells, bells, bells --

Bells, bells, bells --

To the moaning and the groaning of the
bells.