

# The Bells

By Edgar Allen Poe

## 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 paan from the bells!  
And his merry bosom swells  
With the paan of the bells!  
And he dances, and he yells;  
Keeping time, time, time,  
In a sort of Runic rhyme,  
To the paan 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.