

The Poe Man

by Larry Strattnr

“Hey,” he said looking up from *The New Yorker*. “There’s a really interesting article about Edgar Allan Poe in here.”

No reply from his ironing wife.

“It says here biographers have a lot of trouble sorting out his life because he lied about himself all the time.”

“Sounds like you and Edgar have a lot in common.”

“I do *not* lie all the time.”

“OK. Some of the time. Only during daylight.”

“Give me a break. I’m working my ass off here with this writing. It says here Poe never made a dime on any of his poetry. Can you imagine? *The Raven*? *Annabelle Lee*?”

“I rest my case on a lot in common.”

“You should be the one writing. For late night TV. You’re a goddamn riot with the punch lines.”

“Let’s not get personal here. I’m rooting for you to sell something. If only so we can keep the heat on.”

“Ha, Ha. There it is again. I’ve got a lot of stuff out there. Something will break.”

“Yeah like your heart last Tuesday when you got three rejections in one day.”

"I know, I know. I'm over it and back at it. I'm kind of stuck here on chapter twelve so I wrote this little poem to get kick started. Listen to this.

Yeah, well I am
a little bored.
*Stood on the verbal corner
and whored.*

Suffered the fools.
Realized they were me.
Hoped for visions
but couldn't see.
Quit before I really tried.
Took a hot air balloon ride.
*Lied and lied and lied
and lied.*

Second nature to me now.
I say you're gorgeous.
You're a cow.
You can see it's white.
I say it's black.
*And no, I'll never
take it back.*
Secure in my
prevarications.
Citizen of a two-faced nation.

I do not step on sidewalk
cracks.
Lest I break my mother's
heart. *Already broken*
Long ago, by some bozo
I do not know.

Whose genes, still angry,
walk around
in my jeans
making sloshing sounds.

So, imperfect as I may be,
lying makes it true for me.

“Cute. Like I said, I rest my case.”

