“If any ambitious man have a fancy to revolutionize, at one effort, the universal world of human thought, human opinion, and human sentiment, the opportunity is his own…All he has to do is, write and publish a very little book. It’s title should be simple—a few plain words—‘My Heart Laid Bare.’ But—this little book must be true to its title…But to write it—there is the rub. No man dare write it. No man ever will dare write it. No man could write it, even if he dared. The paper would shrivel and blaze at every touch of the fiery pen.”

—Edgar Allan Poe, *Marginalia*

**Letter to John Allan, January 3, 1830**

“Did I, when an infant, solicit your charity and protection, or was it of your own free will that you volunteered your services in my behalf?...I came home, you will remember, the night after the burial—If she had not have died while I was away there would have been nothing for me to regret—*Your* love I never valued—but she I believe loved me as her own child. You promised to forgive all—but you soon forgot your promise.”

**Letter to John Allan, February 21, 1831**

“Dear Sir—In spite of all my resolution to the contrary I am obliged once more to recur to you for assistance — It will however be the last time that I ever trouble any human being — I feel that I am on sick bed from which I never shall get up. I now make an appeal not to your affection because I have lost that but to your sense of justice…I have not strength nor energy left to write half what I feel — You one day or other will fell [sic] how you have treated me. I left [West] Point two days ago and travelling to N. York without a cloak or an[y] other clothing of importance. I have caught a most violent cold and am confined to my bed — I have no money — no friends — I have written to my brother — but he cannot help me — I shall never rise from my bed — besides a most violent cold on my lungs my ear discharges blood and matter continual[y] and my headache is distracting — I hardly know what I am writing — I will write no more — Please send me a little money — quickly — and forget what I said about you”
Letter to John Allan December 29, 1831

“Dear Sir--Nothing but extreme misery and distress would make me venture to intrude myself again upon your notice — If you knew how wretched I am I am sure that you would relieve me — No person in the world I am sure, could have undergone more wretchedness than I have done for some time past — and I have indeed no friend to look to but yourself — and no chance of extricating myself without you[r] assistance. I know that I have no claim upon your generosity — and that what little share I had of your affection is long since forfeited, but, for the sake of what once was dear to you, for the sake of the love you bore me when I sat upon your knee and called you father do not forsake me this only time — and god will remember you accordingly —E A Poe”

ALONE

From childhood’s hour I have not been
As others were—I have not seen
As others saw—I could not bring
My passions from a common spring—
From the same source I have not taken
My sorrow—I could not awaken
My heart to joy at the same tone—
And all I lov’d—I lov’d alone—
Then—in my childhood—in the dawn
Of a most stormy life—was drawn
From ev’ry depth of good and ill
The mystery which binds me still—
From the torrent, or the fountain—
From the red cliff of the mountain—
From the sun that ‘round me roll’d
In its autumn tint of gold—
From the lightning in the sky
As it pass’d me flying by—
From the thunder, and the storm—
And the cloud that took the form
(When the rest of Heaven was blue)
Of a demon in my view—

THE LAKE — TO ——

1
In youth’s spring it was my lot
To haunt of the wide world a spot
The which I could not love the less,
So lovely was the loneliness
Of a wild lake with black rock bound,
And the tall pines that tower’d around:
But when the night had thrown her pall
Upon that spot — as upon all,
And the black wind murmur’d by,
In a dirge of melody —
My infant spirit would awake
To the terror of the lone lake.

2
Yet that terror was not fright —
But a tremulous delight —
A feeling not the jewell’d mine
Should ever bribe me to define —
Nor Love — altho’ the Love be thine:

3
Death was in that poison’d wave —
And, in its gulf a fitting grave
For him who thence could solace bring
To his lone imagining —
Whose solitary soul could make
An Eden of that dim lake.

1829