

Last Flowers: The Romance and Poetry of Edgar Allan Poe and Sarah Helen Whitman

Sarah Helen Whitman, Edgar Allan Poe

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This is the definitive book on Edgar Allan Poe's doomed romance with Providence poet Sarah Helen Whitman, and the first time her poetry has been available in print since 1916. This book contains the poems both poets wrote to and about one another, and the best work they might have read to one another during their courtship. The essay traces Poe's 28 days in Providence in detail, as well as the genealogy and family history of Mrs. Whitman. Additionally, an appreciation of Sarah Helen Whitman's highly romantic poetry helps to place her in the pantheon of American women poets where she belongs. The 66-page essay is a day-by-account of Poe's courtship in Providence as well as the course of his writing and publishing career from 1845 to the end of 1848. The poetry selections include the complete, original version of "Ulalume;" both versions of Whitman's parody poem of "The Raven;" Whitman's Poe sonnet group, and the central section, "Noon," from her masterpiece, "Hours of Life." From this book emerges a clear picture of the intellectual attraction these two poets felt for one another, as well as a detailed account of Poe's attempted suicide. The stifled atmosphere of Providence society, and the role of artists in resisting it, are also illuminated with new revelations about Mrs. Whitman's family and artistic circle. The book also has interesting details about the role of the Providence Athenaeum library as a locale in the Poe-Whitman romance.

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