

# The Crypt

March, 2016

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## I'LL FLY AWAY

As one of my first published stories, *The Wran Song* will always have a special place in my heart. In part, this story was inspired by the song of the same name, recorded by Liam Clancy, and by The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem on their live album from Carnegie Hall in 1962. In Ireland, the modern tradition of wrenboys collecting money is celebrated on St. Stephen's Day, December 26. Like many modern traditions, though, there appears to be more ancient roots, involving pagan celebrations and ritual sacrifice. So, it wasn't too hard to let the darkness creep into an otherwise chipper tune.

The rest of my inspiration came from a more recognizable bird, one often associated with horror, also with roots in myth. In Welsh lore, the head of the mighty Bran, King of Britain, was buried to keep away invading armies right on the spot where the Tower of London now stands. In Welsh, his name means crow, or raven. To this day, ravens are kept in the Tower of London, lest it fall. It's safe to say that *The Raven*, by Edgar Allen Poe, was a game-changer for me. It opened my eyes to the delicious darkness that is part of our human existence. If ever there was a tortured soul, it was Edgar Allen Poe. His tragic life inspired his work, and *The Wran Song* has some subtle tributes to my favorite Poe.

"Quoth the raven: eat my shorts."  
—Bart Simpson.

Cheers to you, Mr. Poe – RJ



*Raven*, by Per.

**"I have absolutely no pleasure in the stimulants in which I sometimes so madly indulge. It has not been in the pursuit of pleasure that I have periled life and reputation and reason. It has been the desperate attempt to escape from torturing memories, from a sense of insupportable loneliness and a dread of some strange impending doom."**

—Edgar Allen Poe

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**Robert James**

Everyone has demons  
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