

### **The Rutted Road**

Bleak autumn mists send down their chilly load,  
A raven shivers as he flutters by;  
Thro' lonely pasture winds the Rutted Road  
Where bord'ring elms loom bare against the sky.

- Those deep-sunk tracks, which dumbly point ahead 5  
 O'er travell'd sands that stretch to Vision's rim,  
 Wake hidden thoughts—a longing half a dread—  
 Till Fancy pauses at the prospect dim.
- Descending shadows bid me haste along  
 The ancient ruts so many knew before; 10  
 A cricket mocks me with his mirthless song—  
 I fear the path—I fain would see no more.
- Yet here, with ox-drawn cart, each thoughtless swain  
 His course pursu'd, nor left the common way;  
 Can I, superior to the rustic train, 15  
 On brighter by-roads find the dawning day?
- With questing look I scan the dark'ning moor;  
 Perchance o'er yonder mound all blessings wait;  
 But still the Rutted Road's resistless lure  
 Constrains my progress to the Path of Fate. 20
- So must I grope between the brooding trees  
 Where those before me found the mystic night;  
 I travel onward, past the wither'd leas—  
 But what, beyond the bend, awaits my sight?
- Do fairer lands than this invite my feet? 25  
 Will Fate on me her choicest boons bestow?  
 What lies ahead, my weary soul to greet?  
*Why is it that I do not wish to know?*