**Literary Allusion in “The Raven”**

Poe had an extensive vocabulary, which is obvious to the readers of both his poetry as well as his fiction. Sometimes this meant introducing words that were not commonly used. In "The Raven," the use of ancient and poetic language seems appropriate, since the poem is about a man spending most of his time with books of "forgotten lore."

 "**Seraphim**," in the fourteenth verse, "perfumed by an unseen censer / Swung by seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled..." is used to illustrate the swift, invisible way a scent spreads in a room. A seraphim is one of the six-winged angels standing in the presence of God. (Bible)

 "**Nepenthe**," from the fourteenth verse, is a potion, used by ancients to induce forgetfulness of pain or sorrow. (Homer’s *The Odyssey*)



 "**Balm in Gilead**," from the fifteenth verse, is a soothing ointment with healing properties made in Gilead, a mountainous region of Palestine east of the Jordan river. (Bible)

 "**Aidenn**," from the sixteenth verse, is an Arabic word for Eden or paradise.



 "**Plutonian**," characteristic of Pluto, the god of the underworld in Roman mythology.



**Source**: The Poe Decoder