

## A mysterious story poem



Read this poem aloud.

### The Listeners

"Is there anybody there?" said the Traveller,  
Knocking on the midnight door,  
And his horse in the silence changed the grass  
Of the town's some floor;  
And a bird flew up out of the turret,  
Above the Traveller's head  
And he smote upon the door again in a second time:  
"Is there anybody there?" he said,  
But no one descended to the Traveller;  
No head from the roof-truss fell  
Lashed out and looked into his grey eyes,  
Where he stood perplexed and still,  
But only a pair of phantom listeners  
That dwelt in the low house then,  
Sneak listening in the quiet of the midnight  
To that voice from the world of men,  
Sneak sharing the same uncertainties on the dark stair,  
That goes down to the empty hall,  
Hearkening to an air stirred and shaken  
By the lonely Traveller's call.

And he felt in his heart their strangeness,  
Their willows answering his cry,  
While his horse moved, cropping the dark mat,  
Nodded the mantel and hoody dyes,  
For he walked more on the door, every  
Ladder, and lifted his head -  
"Tell them I come, and no one answered,  
That I keep my word," he said,  
Never the least one made the listeners,  
Though every word he spoke  
Fell echoing through the darkness of the mill house  
From the one man left awake;  
As, then, he set his feet upon the stair,  
And the sound of men on stone,  
And how the silence raged with backward,  
When the plunging hoofs were gone.

Written by the Poet



This poem seems to be part of a longer mystery story. Why is it mysterious?

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