

## DANCS SZILVIA LAURA

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## GRIEF IN 19<sup>TH</sup>-CENTURY AMERICAN POETRY

**Kulcsszavak:** 19. század; amerikai irodalom; irodalomelmélet; verselemzés; gyász

The topic of bereavement and grief is a significant and recurring issue in life and literature as well, although some periods and societies allow for a more open and honest expression and examination of the grieving process. This paper explores four 19<sup>th</sup>-century poems from four different authors, varying in popularity, viewpoint and technique to showcase the diversity of attitudes towards mourning and grief in this period. The poems selected, in order of appearance, are "The Raven" by Edgar Allan Poe, "The Winter of Life" by Mary Dow Brine, "I Felt a Funeral, in my Brain" by Emily Dickinson, and "At the Funeral of a Minor Poet" by Thomas Bailey Aldrich. This paper will attempt to shed light on how the literary texts transmit emotions and attitudes to the reader by relying on affective language, as well as answer the question of whether contemporaneous depictions of grief are alike. The poems were analysed from an affect science perspective, using the Patrick Colm Hogan's Literature and Emotion and Margaret Wetherell's Affect and Emotion to help define the role of affect in literature. Elizabeth Kübler-Ross' five stage grieving model defined in *On Grief and Grieving* and *On Death and Dying* and the American Psychology Association's 2002 study titled *Resilience to Loss and Chronic Grief* provided significant help in recognising and categorising the grieving process represented in the given works. As we will see in the following paper, the 19<sup>th</sup> century was an outstanding period for diverse and unashamed depictions of bereavement. Perhaps the reason for this is the attitude towards the idea of grief best expressed by Edgar Allan Poe: "that sorrow which the living love to cherish for the dead" This idea reflects a peculiar attachment to and appreciation of the past. Reading these poems can give us a crutch, a guidance in how to process our own traumas related to loss.