

Peerless: Poet Poe and Keller's Laudanum



In November of 1848, Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849) drank over 30 times the recommended dose of opium elixir (“laudanum”) but failed in this suicide attempt. A year later, on Election Day in 1849, a delirious Poe was believed to have been drugged to coerce him to vote in multiple locations. He died shortly after. Poe was memorialized in 2009 on a 42-cent postage stamp (*left*). Poe never sampled the Keller’s Peerless Laudanum supplied in later years from a wooden box (*right*) by Baltimore druggists Carr, Owens & Heineman. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc.)

*George S. Bause, M.D., M.P.H., Honorary Curator, ASA’s Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology, Park Ridge, Illinois, and Clinical Associate Professor, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio. UJYC@aol.com.*