

Read the passages below and answer the following questions.

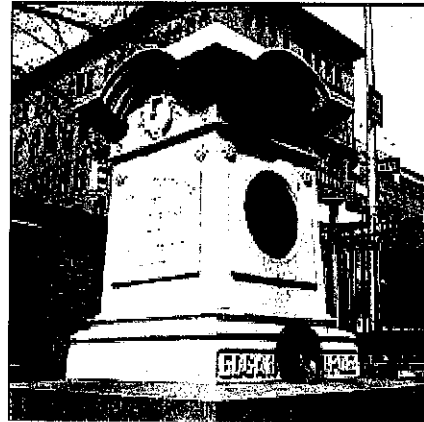
Poe's Mysterious Death: A New Theory

An article from *The New York Observer* by Leon Neyfakh

In 2007, the writer Matthew Pearl wrote a novel exploring one of the great mysteries of American literary history: What killed Edgar Allan Poe? Pearl never imagined that a fictional work would lead him to a new theory about Poe's death, that Poe's death had been the result of a brain tumor.

After the printing of his novel, fans kept asking Pearl why Mr. Poe's body could not be exhumed or dug up from its Baltimore grave and examined to settle the matter of his death for good.

Pearl explained to his readers that Poe's body could not be exhumed because it would destroy the large marble monument atop Poe's grave. However, Pearl remembered reading that Poe's body *had* been exhumed, 26 years after his death, so that his coffin could be moved to the front of the cemetery. In addition, articles from that time period suggested that onlookers had been able to see Poe's brain during that move.



The first article from *The Baltimore Gazette* claimed that "a medical gentleman" had seen "that the brain of the poet Poe, on the opening of his grave ... was in an almost perfect state of preservation," and that "the cerebral mass, as seen through the base of the skull, evidenced no signs of disintegration or decay, though, of course, it is somewhat diminished in size."

The second article, published in 1878 in the *St. Louis Republican*, noted that "the gravedigger who attended to the removal of the poet's body" had lifted the head during the exhumation and reported seeing the brain "[rattling] around inside just like a lump of mud." The gravedigger reportedly thought "the brain had dried and hardened in the skull."

Interested, Mr. Pearl asked a coroner for an expert opinion. The coroner explained that the gravedigger was wrong because the brain would have turned into liquid and would no longer exist after 25 years. But a tumor, the coroner said, can solidify and harden while the rest of the body decomposes. Perhaps that's what the witnesses were describing, she suggested. Sure enough, when Mr. Pearl looked up photographs of brain tumors, he saw that some of them really did look like shrunken brains.

1. The main idea of this passage is -

- A. Pearl's 2007 novel was a hit
- B. Poe was a great author
- C. A new theory is that a brain tumor caused Poe's death
- D. Poe's body cannot be exhumed

2. A detail that supports the main idea is -

- A. Fans kept asking Pearl questions
- B. Poe's death is one of the great mysteries of American literary history
- C. A tumor, which would harden while the body decomposed, would explain the rattling
- D. Removing the body would destroy the large marble monument atop Poe's grave

3. What is the purpose of this passage?

- A. To inform people that Matthew Pearl wrote a new novel
- B. To entertain people with ridiculous theories that cannot be true
- C. To convince people that Poe's death was caused by a brain tumor
- D. To criticize the sexton's original report

4. Which of the following is another way to say the highlighted text above?

- A. Pearl moved Poe's body 26 years ago to a more important place.
- B. Twenty-six years after he died, Poe's body was destroyed when his coffin was moved.
- C. Pearl read that Poe's body was dug up and moved to the front of the graveyard.
- D. Poe's body was removed from the ground so that Pearl could examine it.

5. What does the highlighted word above "exhumation" most likely mean in this passage?

- A. To revive or restore
- B. To dig up
- C. To get rid of
- D. To bring to life