

A Valentine

by Edgar Allan Poe

This poem by Edgar Allan Poe contains a riddle. Poe challenges his readers to solve the riddle to find out who the valentine was written about.

For her this rhyme is penned, whose luminous eyes,
Brightly expressive as the twins of Loeda,
Shall find her own sweet name, that, nestling lies
Upon the page, enwrapped from every reader.
Search narrowly the lines!—they hold a treasure
Divine—a talisman—an amulet
That must be worn *at heart*. Search well the measure—
The words—the syllables! Do not forget
The trivialest point, or you may lose your labor!
And yet there is in this no Gordian knot
Which one might not undo without a sabre,
If one could merely comprehend the plot.
Enwritten upon the leaf where now are peering
Eyes scintillating soul, there lie *perdus*
Three eloquent words oft uttered in the hearing
Of poets, by poets—as the name is a poet's, too.
Its letters, although naturally lying
Like the knight Pinto—Mendez Ferdinando—
Still form a synonym for Truth—Cease trying!
You will not read the riddle, though you do the best *you* can do.

Questions

1. Poe hides the name of a person in this poem. The name is spelled out by using one letter from each line. The first letter of the name is the first letter of line 1: F. The second letter is found on the second line: r. Can you discover a pattern? If so, what is it?
2. What is the name of the person Poe is writing about?
3. What does *talisman* mean here: "they hold a treasure / Divine—a talisman—an amulet / That must be worn at heart."?
4. What type of figurative language is used here: "whose luminous eyes, / Brightly expressive as the twins of Loeda"?