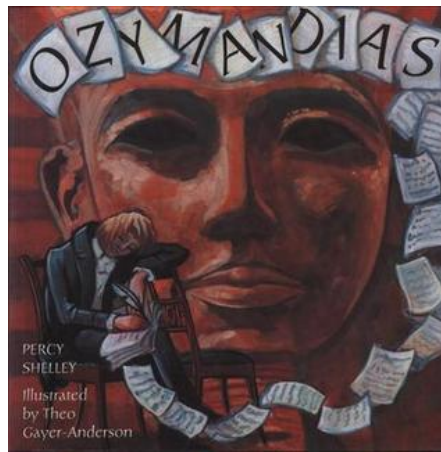




Ozymandias

Percy Bysshe Shelley , Theo Gayer-Anderson (Illustrator)

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A picture book edition of the poem. The poem, Ozymandias, was composed in 1817. It is one of the most famous poems of P.B. Shelley. It was composed in competition with Shelley's friend, Horace Smith who wrote another sonnet on the same topic named Ozymandias. The theme of this sonnet is the decline of all leaders of all the empires they built. However mighty they have been in their time, history has destroyed them. Ozymandias was another name for Ramesses, a great Pharaoh king of ancient Egypt.

Ozymandias Details

Date : Published 1999 by Hoopoe Books (first published 1817)

ISBN : 9789775325822

Author : Percy Bysshe Shelley , Theo Gayer-Anderson (Illustrator)

Format : 36 pages

Genre : Poetry, Classics, Academic, School, Fiction, Literature, English Literature

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From Reader Review Ozymandias for online ebook

Rao Javed says

The writer makes his point really well in brief line. The thought behind this poem is truly universal.

Benjamin Stahl says

A very short but striking poem by the guy who was having sex with the girl who wrote *Frankenstein*. Fucking there's your contextual analysis, Mr Oxford don, you ...

Eric says

This is a review and ranking of the poem, rather than the book noted above.

*I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.*

If only all the world would learn this message, and by learning it, leave a legacy not constrained to broken statues that lay in pieces around us.

Bookdragon Sean says

Percy Shelley saw the world for what it was, and what it will be. He saw through the cracks of civilisation and human greed; he saw what man has become and will always be unless he changes. Ozymandias is a simple homage to human power, to human corruption and to human ruling. This is a poem with true universal value.

*"I met a traveller from an antique land,
Who said—"Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,*

*And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal, these words appear:
My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away."*

Ozymandias is not remembered. For all their monuments of human suffering and power, they achieved nothing. A statue does not define success; a stone likeness is not tangible to Godliness. All it does is evoke man's own blackened heart. Human structures are futile. They are temporary, brief and finite. They will shatter and break like the men who built them. But nature, nature remains. Indeed, "the lone and level sands stretch far away" and will continue to stretch long after man ceases to walk them.

Achi says

Short, but mesmerizing poem... great example that nothing stands against time, nor power, nor fame, nor money.

even the huge empire that once was stretched across the desert, now is covered with sand and dust.

TV Show "Breaking Bad" made one of the best episode by this name, which is clear visualization of what this poem represents. The Fall.

'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.'

Sarah says

"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Beautiful. Yet in a way, very telling of the insignificance of our lives. Power, fame and money all only exist from the time we are born until the time we die, then slowly but surely time and nature are sure to forget about us. Even our own species forgets, thus making us buried in the sands of obscurity. Even the greatest kings, such as Ozymandias, are subject to such a fate. Although the monument which this poem focuses on exists solely to commemorate the mighty status of the king, it seems as if even the former grandeur of it has

all gone away, all eaten away by the desert. So the question this brings up in my own mind is this: are we all striving for whatever it is we want in vain, when in the long run we will all be in the same state as Ozymandias?

"Ozymandias" is such a powerful yet simple sonnet that develops such a large scope over so few lines that it baffles and amazes me. I sat there reading it over and over, really letting the theme of it sink into my brain. While it is not a happy thought to have, it is true, and in a way the truth of it is what makes it a beautiful poem.

Tadiana ☆Night Owl? says

In preparation for reading Connie Willis's latest novella, *I Met a Traveller in an Antique Land*, I went back and read Percy Bysshe Shelley's famous Romantic-era sonnet *Ozymandias*, which is the source for her title and informs her story. Here's the poem in its entirety:

I met a traveller from an antique land,
Who said—"Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
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And on the pedestal, these words appear:
My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

I think this is my favorite work by Shelley (I studied quite a few of his works back in my college English major days). His imagery is wonderful: you can see the ancient, broken statue in the middle of a desolate desert. The dual meaning of the word "despair": Ozymandias (a Greek name for the Egyptian pharaoh Ramses II) means for everyone else to fear his might and power, but now we despair because nothing man-made lasts forever, no matter how great.

Shelley made up his own rhyme scheme for this sonnet (for the curious, it's ababa cdcd efef, rather than something more typical like the Shakespearean rhyme scheme, abab cdcd efef gg). It adds to the general sense of unease this poem leaves you with.

A couple of other insights: Note Ozymandias's use of the phrase "King of Kings" to describe himself. It's a phrase used in the Bible in reference to Jesus Christ ... so Ozymandias considered himself near-divine. Shelley also uses alliteration to great effect in this poem, with phrases like "cold command," "boundless and bare," and "lone and level."

The message of this poem is a great lesson for our day as well, slashing at the pretensions and self-grandeur of political leaders. And that's all I'm going to say about that. :)

But I have to say, I'm still trying to figure out what exactly Shelly was trying to convey with the lines "The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed." Scholars are still scratching their heads, so I'm in good company. It does seem to be the sculptor's hand and heart, rather than Ozymandias's, as I originally thought? (*ETA: See comment 2: I've changed my mind again.) Feel free to comment.

There are some great illustrations for this poem. Here's another:

Dana says

Fame, power, money...all are temporary. Everything is subjected to time and time swallows them up. Man is insignificant before the power of time. The poet uses a shattered statue to highlight the ephemeral nature of fame, vanity and power. The one great king's proud words "My name is Ozymandias, king of kings, Look upon my work, ye mighty and despair" has been ironically disproved. Ozymandias works and might have crumbled to pieces. His civilization has disappeared and all has been razed or brought to the ground by the impersonal, indiscriminate, destructive power of time and history. This is one of the most dominant sonnet with political overtones by the contemporary poet, P.B. Shelley. Ozymandias symbolizes political power but the statue is a metaphor for the pride of the whole of the mankind. "Dust, thou art to dust returnest" proves to be true at the end.

Jad Hafez Wannous says

This is poem with true universal value.

I MET a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert... Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is OZYMANDIAS, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Elequeni says

Sentimental

David Sarkies says

The Legacy of Rameses

10 January 2012

This is a rather short poem, a sonnet to be precise, being a poem of sixteen lines with a specific metre. Now, while I like poetry, I would hardly call myself a poet in that my skill in writing metre is not the best, and in many cases I fall into a system of rhyme, which I find to be pretty corny (at least to my ears). This does not mean that I have not attempted poetry in my life, and many of the poems that I have written tend to be rather short (none of the epic poetry of Homer or Milton).

These days poetry does not seem to be a huge as it was in the past, though there are still quite a number of poets out there. However the modern image of a poet seems to be some guy sitting in a rotting apartment subsisting on a diet of whiskey and cigarettes (and for some reason Allen Ginsberg comes to mind in this regard, though I suspect his diet consisted of more than just whiskey and cigarettes). In my mind, these days (as has been the case in the past) there simply is no money in poetry. In the days of old though poets tended to survive on their own wealth (such as Emily Dickinson) or were patrons of the nobility (such as William Shakespeare) as as such many of their poems where simply praises of their patrons (once again William Shakespeare comes to mind).

That does not necessarily mean that poetry is dead, we do see it crop up in movies, and in a way songs these days are simply poetry put to music, but then again this was something that would have occurred in the past as well. Take the Greeks for instance, many of their poetical works (in particular Homer) were either sung, or at least had music playing in the background, which is interesting since it is believed that Ancient Greek drama developed from poetry readings.

I should make mention of Percy Shelley though. The truth is, Percy Shelley's claim to fame is not that he was a poet (though many of us in literary circles do recognise his poetic skill) but that he was the husband of Mary Shelley, the author of *Frankenstein*. They say that she went on to become quite famous while her husband, who was quite famous at the time, disappeared into the mists of obscurity. Personally I believe that that is a little unfair on poor Percy Shelley since this particular poem, and it is a very famous poem at that, is a lot more than simply something written by Mary Shelley's husband.

Ozymandias is one of those poems that seems to continue to crop up. I first encountered it in high school during one of my English classes when we were looking at (surprise, surprise) poetry. It seems that whenever the topic of poetry comes up in high school, this is one of the poems that is looked at, maybe because it is short (it is a sonnet), but maybe because despite its shortness, it actually does have quite a lot to say.

I won't reproduce the poem here, and anyway, it can easily be found on the internet. Anyway, it is a poem about Rameses II, one of the great kings of Egypt. It is generally accepted (though not by me) that he was the Pharaoh of the oppression, that is the Pharaoh that ruled Egypt during the period that the Jews were slaves and before Moses led them out of captivity to the promise land. However, this is not the time or the place for me to go into my historical theories on the Egyptian timeline. What this is the time is to comment that what Shelley is doing here is creating an image of a fallen statue in a windswept desert. In his time, Rameses could have been considered the most powerful person on Earth, however in Shelley's time, he was all but forgotten. His works and his buildings survive, but have long since been looted by grave robbers. The remains of his kingdom are still present, but its glory days a long since gone.

[image error]

Shelley, however, wasn't writing about Ancient Egypt or some long dead king, but rather as a reminder to the people of his day. The year is 1818, and England had recently defeated Napoleon and they pretty much sat on the top of the world. The British Empire straddled the globe, there had been no empire since that had even come to compare to the might and the wealth of the British Empire. While Percey did not know it at this time, but it was the beginning of the Pax Britannia, a hundred years of relative peace where the wealth and the power of the British Empire would continue to expand, and their influence would reach out to all corners of the globe. It would not be until the early 20th Century that Britain would meet a rival that could even consider taking a shot at the title.

However, the concern is not so much that Britain was at the top of the world, but rather that this too will pass. Three thousand years in the future Queen Victoria will, so he believes, be another Ozymandias. Even now her statues can be found throughout the former British Empire, sitting in pride of place in many of the cities around the world. Here in Adelaide her statue sits in the middle of the city, as it does in Hong Kong. Everywhere you go in the former empire you encounter reminders of Victoria, whether it be the name of a state, a city, or some gentleman's club. However, like Rameses, this too will pass. The people at Shelley's time will not see it. Most of them would not be alive when Arch-duke Ferdinand is assassinated, and the only memories of Napoleon would be those in the books, or the stories that old men would remember their Grandfather's telling them when they were children. As with Rameses, so to will this pass.

Jason says

Patton was on tonight, and this poem came to my mind while I was watching it. I have no idea why.

It's no secret that I can't stand poetry, but I do have a couple of poems that I love, and this is one of them. I was introduced to it in... well, I don't know. I definitely read it in 12th grade English, but I might've hit it in ninth grade as well, and possibly seventh. If I'm right about the other two years, then the Henrico county public school system really liked it.

This is so short I'll just put it right here:

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed:

And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

It's basically about a guy immortalizing himself with a statue and chest thumping about how great everything he's built is, but all that's left is his feet, part of his face, and the bragging because somewhere along the way someone went all ISIS on his shit. At some point I got it into my head that Ozymandias was also a complete unknown to the world when the statue was seen in the poem, but that doesn't seem to be the case. That would've been cooler, but what do I know about good poetry?

It's based on Ramses II who isn't only not an unknown (is that a triple negative?), but is considered the greatest pharaoh in Egypt's history. Several statues of his still exist and are being preserved. Same goes for his mummified corpse. His body is 3,229 years dead, and we still have it. He still has temples all over the place, and those that are damaged are being restored. He still has shit hanging around over three millennia later. I'd say that'd be a little despairing to any haters.

But it's possible Ramses is the pharaoh who had a tangle with that Moe fellow in the Bible, and if that's the case you can bet your sweet Yamaka that this would stick in his craw:

I've said it before, and I'll say it again. Don't fuck around with the Jews, you're not going to win. (If you're lucky, this is all that'll happen to you.)

Anyway, Ramses definitely led some raids into Canaan, but he was mostly fighting Hittites. I don't think his face got melted off of him, though, cause God don't give a shit about the Hits.

I'm sorry; I didn't mean to wax historical... too much. I just really like this poem. There's poetic justice involved, and it's a slap in the face of ego. My ego is constantly getting burst, so it's nice to see it happen to someone else too.

And I also love the line "Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair." It's a fun one to slip into casual conversation whether it belongs there or not.

Bettie? says

Nation's Favourite Poems: features in a 1996 nationwide poll compilation.

From wiki - *t is frequently anthologised and is probably Shelley's most famous short poem. It was written in competition with his friend Horace Smith, who wrote another sonnet entitled "Ozymandias"*

Famous it might be, and the subject grand, it just doesn't 'do' it for me.

Tim says

Short and because of that, and its inherent value, worth reading a couple times in succession. I read it first to get a grasp of what it was then, then to dig into the meaning, then to address the meter and mechanics. Worthwhile.

Carlos Ibanez says

A great poem, that talks about the power and mighty of the great pharaoh Ramses II (Ozymandias) that crumbled.

"My name is Ozymandias,
King of kings
Look on my works,
Ye mighty and despair"

this might be the most memorable quote in the poem, we can understand how the the author (and may be even the pharaoh) thought of him as the king of kings.

And to be honest, a poem as powerful and beautiful like this one wouldn't deserve a rank of five star it would deserve like an eight star rank

Sarah Pangloss says

I have always loved this poem - especially since I have spent so much time in Egypt, at Luxor. I will - and have - read this poem many, many times throughout my entire lifetime. It resonates within my soul, as I realize not just that all is transitory. "Look upon my works, ye Mighty, and despair."

Kenza Harrouch says

This poem shows that even the powerful people such as Ozymandias, after they died nothing will remain round. Ozymandias thought that he was the king of kings that nobody like him in the world. He was arrogant and very proud of himself, but nowhere is just a piece of history. Even his statue is destroyed by nature's destruction of his human vanity. To conclude, power has a limit, has a period and nothing is immortal.

Jon(athan) Nakapalau says

How many trunkless legs of stone populate our world today - waiting for the abrasive winds of time to sand them into nothing - one of my favorite poems.

Sofia says

Here read by Bryan Cranston

a great putter in place and it also creates a sort of calm, being at peace.

Imman Saqqaf says

Nothing lasts forever. Glory, reputation, conquests or occupations, everything will come to an end eventually. This ambiguous ode carries between its folds heaps of philosophical matters.

Scholars really tired themselves giving different interpretations for this poem and many others. I believe that the beauty of a poem lies in the multiplicity of its interpretations by each person. Everyone has his own vision and saying about what he reads, sees or hears and there is no right or wrong when it comes to analyzing a poem.

However, one line really catch me up, "**The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed.**" it's obvious that the poem talks about a king named **Ozymandias**, where what left of his statue speaks of himself. However, that particular line is a political kind of philosophy. It tells (from my personal view) that leaders, kings, emperors whomever got an authority on people, don't have to like, love or show empathy toward their people. Call me Machiavellian, I do not care. But at the end of the day what really matters is "**the heart that fed**" not the "**hand that mocked**". The end is what really matters here.

The line reminded me of Muammar Gaddafi and Saddam Hussein. They were men of principles, they did a lot of bad things to their people, mocked them explicitly and implicitly, but at the end of everyday they gave them a life that is surly better than the life they are living right now. And to me, this matters.

The poem holds a lot of symbolic and imagery content. The title of the poem itself is a metaphor from another name to Ramses II. There is a lot of death in the poem; the death of the king and its people or civilization and the death of the statue itself, it was like a lyric from Rains of Castamere, "Now the rains weep o'er his hall; and not a soul to hear" it's just epic. The poem gave a life to the statue, it is the one whose telling the story not the traveler, the traveler's job was more of pointing out the events that led to the destruction of the statue, and nevertheless if you concentrated in the statue it will reveal itself for you.
