

Ozymandias

By Percy Bysshe Shelley

*Transcription, correction, editorial commentary, and
markup by Students and Staff at the University of Virginia*

[Audio File], [Audio](#)

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OZYMANDIAS

1 I met a Traveller from an antique land,
2 Who said, "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
3 Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
4 Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
5 And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
6 Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
7 Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
8 The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
9 And on the pedestal, these words appear:
10 'My name is OZYMANDIAS, King of Kings;
11 Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
12 Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
13 Of that Colossal Wreck, boundless and bare
14 The lone and level sands stretch far away."

GLIRASTES., [Glirastes](#)

Footnotes

Audio Librivox recording of "Ozymandias," read by David Barnes

Glirastes "Glirastes," the made-up name by which Shelley signed this poem in its first printing in *The Examiner* on January 11, 1818, is an inside joke and a note of affection for his wife Mary Shelley. (Remarkably, Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein: or, the Modern Prometheus*, had been published less than two weeks earlier, on January 1.) Percy Shelley's pet name for Mary was (for reasons unknown) "dormouse." "Glirastes" is a compound word that Shelley made up, combining the the Latin word "gliradae," the scientific name for dormice, and the Greek "erastes," meaning "lover of." Hence "lover of dormouse"--an affectionate, coded gesture to Mary.