

## Ozymandias awake

A prose poem for sleep-walkers to awake to  
[Previously published as fb 190422 piya]

Our greatest task is to give birth to ourself. We don't even know what this mean. Let's investigate this moment.

Most of us exist; we have not begun living yet. To exist means to be caught up in the world. It is the womb we settle in, caught in it as it feeds us with what we feel we lack: we run like cheetahs after delicious prey. We look sleek and beautiful in our animal pursuits.

We are caught in the world, fighting off, rejecting off, ignoring, trying to fight off, ignore, reject what we see as the lack that we are: the old, the poor, the useless. Unless we can feed on them to our greater glory, so that we shine with the glory and grandeur that they lack. We see the light and move like crowds of insects to the naked flames of fame and fortune.

Most of are content to go with the flow like dead fish, like slithering eels with the current. We are caught in the cycles and eddies of familiar flows. Bigger fish come and eat us, but never mind, we are legion. We exist for others and for none, with neither meaning nor purpose: predictable like worms, wild beasts, fishes, birds and bees. Only our pride makes us different, who wants to be human.

We travel the world, seeking the new and the great, tired of the old and small from which we heartlessly spawned. We loathe the old we see, we are not them and never will be. We ignore the sick, we are well and never will be them. We turn our back on the dead, unlike them, we exist. Darkly, we see the vast and trunkless legs of stone in huge vaults and wonder: We must have built those, slaves of the past.

Then, we stand in envious shock at Church spires in the clouds, Castle turrets that once shielded kings and country. We see the piled stones and proud dirt, missing the sweat, blood, tears and tearing flesh on which these sad structures stand. Surely, we will have our own Church and Castle one day. We dream. Never waking from them.

We hear the festive laughters and lively loving of happy folks in festive dances. We rather watch than dance with them. They are but peasants and poor; real dances move with vibrant music in crowded chambers; dressed for the occasion and gently rubbing the wealthy of land and mighty of hand. That's what dances are really for: we keep in motion with the powerful flow. They might notice us.

We hear strange voices, as if to disturb our luscious dreams: what life is there to wake to from this sweet existence? We, who have the power to read every book in existence. We who have the ear to hear every wisdom that is sound. We who have the power to smell the fragrance of how we smell now. Yes, we taste, too, the world-cuisine; others just eat what fits their plate and palate.

Only the mighty may touch us; what love is there but from others have it? We are the world; this is our womb. There is no room for what other. It is a pointless empty existence that is filled by the attention of the chosen other. But the other has not chosen us; we are simply lost and following thinking we would be ahead.

Then, we hear our own voice:

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.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46565/ozymandias>