



Percy Bysshe Shelley, as published in *The Examiner* magazine (11 Jan, 1818)

The New Colossus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she
With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

Emma Lazarus (1883), poem on the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbour

National Monuments

Low house of rough bark,
small enough for a fairy
delights my sight

Until it's clear it covers a grave
and worse, it's stained deck-red
shingled with asphalt.

Some park official has kept up
what was meant to moss
and rot and fall.

Grave houses, clan-marked:
sturgeon scratched in a pine,
simple lines of eagle and marten,

Whiskered totems, some on crosses.
Other tribes carve headstones:
Six-Nations' eel flips its infinity of tail ∞

Bear tracks tell complex genealogy,
map land and tongue and history
to crane's stick legs and turtle's shell.

Doodem signs, national markers
the body makes by being born,
that speak your only, only name.

Your last word etched, kept, engraved.

Heid Erdrich (Ojibway) from *National Monuments* (2008)

Questions to ponder

- What do you think about monuments in general? Why?
- Compare how these 3 poems present a monument. What is each monument doing, and who is it for?
- How is each poet speaking through the monument?
- How do the words conjure up a visual and sensory impression of the monument?
- What is the poem's sense of time? Of place? Of human relation?
- In what ways are poems like and unlike monuments?