## OZYMANDIAS.

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."

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
Glows 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?