

A Dream Within a Dream

Edgar Allan Poe · 1849

It begins with a farewell. It ends with a person beside the sea, unable to keep even a few grains of sand from slipping through the hand. Grief, time and uncertainty inhabit this tiny scene.

Created by Mea Zen & Colombine MichelangeLove

A Dream Within a Dream

THE COMPLETE POEM · ORIGINAL ENGLISH

Take this kiss upon the brow!
And, in parting from you now,
Thus much let me avow —
You are not wrong, who deem
That my days have been a dream;
Yet if Hope has flown away
In a night, or in a day,
In a vision, or in none,
Is it therefore the less gone?
All that we see or seem
Is but a dream within a dream.

I stand amid the roar
Of a surf-tormented shore,
And I hold within my hand
Grains of the golden sand —
How few! yet how they creep
Through my fingers to the deep,
While I weep — while I weep!
O God! Can I not grasp
Them with a tighter clasp?
O God! can I not save
One from the pitiless wave?
Is all that we see or seem
But a dream within a dream?

1849 original text, public domain.

Three ways of reading

It begins with a farewell. It ends with a person beside the sea, unable to keep even a few grains of sand from slipping through the hand. Grief, time and uncertainty inhabit this tiny scene.

01 / From farewell to shore

The first stanza wonders whether hope lost in a dream is any less lost. The second translates this question into touch: the sand keeps slipping away, no matter how tightly the hand closes.

02 / A question, not a verdict

Poe does not declare the world to be a simulation. The poem asks what remains of our certainty when life appears transient and impossible to hold.

03 / The images speak to each other

Footprints on a Portuguese beach, the ocean and the morning light offer a visual echo of Poe's shore. This is a creative parallel, not evidence of hidden causality.

EDITORIAL / REDAKČNÁ POZNÁMKA

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Time is not the grain we save. It is the moment in which we hold it.

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