

"The perfect tense or aspect is a verb form that indicates that an action or circumstance occurred earlier than the time under consideration, often focusing attention on the resulting state rather than on the occurrence itself."

Once upon a time when all things were possible I  
looked at a stone and fell deep into it.  
Once upon a time I understood the illusion and  
why humans let their clocks start ticking.  
Once upon a time I saw the world without it, but  
after all, it never existed.  
Once upon a time I sought for eternity.

"The Future Perfect tense talks about the past in the future."

"In Present Perfect tense there is always a connection with the past and with the present."

"The Past Perfect tense talks about the past in the past."

2, 3, 4

"[The author of nature] ...has not permitted in his works any symptom of infancy or of old age, or any sign by which we may estimate either their future or their past duration."

Once upon a time I was looking for an illusion. A useful one, but sometimes frightening.

Once upon a time I was looking for an illusion of control.

Once upon a time I was looking for the necessity to not go mad.

Once upon a time I was looking for the dream of independency.

"There is only one solution to that greatest of all mysteries, the origin of everything. But to understand it requires that we go on a mental journey, perhaps the most daring ever undertaken. It is a voyage into deep time, a voyage that begins with genesis and ends in the very remote future of a universe that, quite astonishingly, contrives to become aware of itself."

Once upon a time I dug with my hands in the  
ground.

Once upon a time that was hard.

Once upon a time that hurt.

Once upon a time this was exactly where they  
said the treasure would be found.

"Without time, without space. Without matter or energy. This is the beginning of the universe, and there is nothing — not even a point, not even a void."



Once upon a time I could write it, but not think it.  
Once upon a time we needed a beginning.  
Once upon a time we needed an end.  
Once upon a time we had already written the last  
page.

"And they say back then our universe  
Was an empty sea, until a silver fox  
And her cunning mate began to sing  
A song that became the world we know" 8

"Out of this nothingness there arises a stir — an eddy, a flicker, a something inconceivably small. And with that something, as part of it, time, space, and other wonders come spontaneously into being. The lid of Pandora's cosmic box has begun to lift and from beneath it issue all the marvels of creation."

Once upon a time I painted a stone from our  
backyard in gold.

Once upon a time I put it in the box where my  
most precious items lay.

Once upon a time when the box and treasures  
were gone, I found the stone.

Once upon a time this stone will become even  
more precious to me.

"Now's the only time I know" 10

"Time, a measured or measurable period, a continuum that lacks spatial dimensions. Time is of philosophical interest and is also the subject of mathematical and scientific investigation. Time appears to be more puzzling than space because it seems to flow or pass or else people seem to advance through it. But the passage or advance seems to be unintelligible."

Once upon a time I will dig until I can't dig  
anymore.

Once upon a time they never told me what it  
would look like.

Once upon a time I started to collect what was  
there.

Once upon a time I may be left with the remains.

"What if one day things everywhere ground to a halt? What if birds froze in mid-flight, people froze in mid-sentence, and planets and subatomic particles alike froze in mid-orbit? (...) Is such a thing possible? If the answer to this last question is Yes — if it is possible for there to be a period of time during which nothing changes, anywhere (except, perhaps, for the pure passage of time itself, if there is such a thing) — then it is possible that a worldwide "freeze" will occur between the time you finish reading this sentence and the time you start the next sentence. In fact, if it's possible for there to be a period of time without change, then it may well be that a million years have passed since you finished reading the last sentence."



"The Creator and Devourer. 'Time has engendered everything that has been and will be' (Bhagavad Gita). 'Time, which in progressing, destroys the world' (Upanishads). It is also descent from, and return to, origins; it is a destructive force, but also the revealer of Truth. 'Once upon a time' symbolizes the Golden Age when all things were possible. (...) Symbols of time are the hourglass, clock, sickle, serpent, turning wheel, the circle as endless cycles but also cosmic completion, scythe, the Reaper, who is also Cronos/Saturn as Time." 13

Once upon a time someone said we had all the time in the world.

Once upon a time my sister leaned down to me and said: Isn't that the same thing as saying we have none?

Once upon a time I didn't understand. But she was always like that.

Once upon a time that was a wonderful expression, or a very sad one.

"From earliest times, man has devised ways of checking off the days and years, because only by measuring time in units can he relate one event to another. The moon, the sun, the stars and the change of days, nights, and seasons were his first time-keepers."

"Time has always been inextricably linked with the Sun. The ancient Egyptians and Babylonians used sundials that roughly divided daylight into 12 equal segments. 60-minute hours and 60-second minutes are the product of the ancient Mesopotamian sexagesimal (base 60) numbering system. The French attempted to use the decimal system (base 10 rather than 12) for time-keeping, but that never caught on. The Greeks improved the sundial by marking gradations on sundials to indicate the divisions of time during the day."

"If you flick through a book, you'll notice that the book doesn't have infinite pages. It has a beginning, middle and end. Humans possess a thing called a narrative bias; we make sense of the world around us through stories. (...) Without a narrative you wouldn't have a conscious and without a conscious, there would be nothing but white noise ringing in your ears. (...) If you're confronted with the thought that the beginning and the end don't exist – they're just a manmade invention used to perceive the space around us – your brain will fall into a state of disarray (cognitive dissonance)."

Once upon a time someone compared time with  
a book.

'Once upon a time' was the entrance to fiction  
and the dream.

'Once upon a time' constructed our reality.  
Once upon a time in a fairy tale we could fully  
understand time.

"Consider the question of whether time should be represented by a line without a beginning. Aristotle has argued (roughly) that time cannot have a beginning on the grounds that in order for time to have a beginning, there must be a first moment of time, but that in order to count as a moment of time, that allegedly first moment would have to come between an earlier period of time and a later period of time, which is inconsistent with its being the first moment of time. (Aristotle argues in the same way that time cannot have an end.)"

Once upon a time there will be no time.  
Once upon a time there will be a space where  
narrative isn't necessary.  
'Once upon a time' doesn't exist in eternity.  
Once upon a time there is only being.



"Time is not important, only life." 18

Once upon a time I understood what I was  
digging for.

Once upon a time someone saw timelines.

Once upon a time they had to change their  
narrative.

Once upon a time someone said 'time is under  
our feet'.

"Intimations of an understanding that Earth had a significant history are found in the writings of Herodotus during the 5th century B.C. While traveling on the Nile Delta, he realized that the sediments had accumulated from river floods and that thousands of years had been required to form the visible part of the delta deposits."

Once upon a time I was on a trip with a friend on  
a rocky island.

Once upon a time we sat down for a cup of  
coffee.

Once upon a time the limestone I sat on broke  
and revealed the history of Earth.

Once upon a time I held a 'now' in one hand, and  
a 'then' in the other.

"A bit over two centuries ago, James Hutton recognized the significance to Earth history of the angular contact between two sets of sedimentary rock layers at Siccar Point on the southeast coast of Scotland which set in motion the modern science of Geology; horizontal beds of sandstone that formed the land surface beneath Hadrian's Wall, already old in terms of Scottish history, rested on the vertically upturned edges of still older sedimentary rocks. Those older rocks had to have been lithified from unconsolidated horizontal sediments before being deformed to their present attitude and eroded to form an ancient land surface beneath the sandstones. Here was indisputable evidence that Earth had a history that far pre-dated human history. Thus the time context for humanity was clearly established and has been reinforced by all subsequent geologic work."

Once upon a time our now will be past.  
Once upon a time we will be an era in the  
ground.  
Once upon a time we might become stones.  
Once upon a time someone will find us during a  
coffee break.

"Radioactivity in a mineral is like a clock. The length of time this clock has been ticking is the mineral's radiometric age."

Once upon a time I wanted to see the magic in  
the stone, but didn't really believe in it.

Once upon a time I would look at the stone and  
see time. Like putting my ear close to a seashell  
and hear the sea.

Once upon a time there was a compact darkness  
in it and an intensity I couldn't even imagine.

Once upon a time it couldn't be in any other way.



"In 1903, physicists Ernest Rutherford and Frederick Soddy noticed that some thorium in their lab had converted itself into radium. Now we know that's because thorium is radioactive, meaning its nucleus is unstable – it doesn't have a good balance of positively-charged protons and neutral neutrons. (...) [Radioactive decay] lowers the energy needed to keep everything together, so the nucleus become more stable. Some forms of radioactive decay change the number of protons in the nucleus – and therefore, the element itself. Researchers weren't completely sure mercury [Z=80] could turn into gold [Z=79] until the 1940s, after they'd figured out how to force atoms to release particles by bombarding them with tons of extra energy in the form of neutrons. But there was a problem – the isotopes of gold that mercury turned into, were radioactive [and unstable]."

Once upon a time someone created a stone.  
Once upon a time someone drank gold and lived  
forever.  
Once upon a time someone knew eternity.  
Once upon a time there was a recipe for time.

"The [Philosopher's] Stone was believed to turn base metals into gold, and also to produce the Elixir of Life, which could make you immortal. 'Genuine' alchemists – the forerunners of chemists and physicists – such as Sir Isaac Newton and Nicolas Flamel, sought, sometimes over lifetimes, to discover the secret of its creation."

"One interpretation of the 'instructions' left by the alchemists is that they are symbolic of a spiritual journey, leading the alchemist from ignorance (base metal) to enlightenment (gold). There seems to have been a mystical element to the work the alchemist was engaged upon, which set it apart from chemistry (of which it was undoubtedly both an offshoot and forerunner)."

Once upon a time gold was equal to light.  
Once upon a time gold was equal to time.  
Once upon a time gold was all other metals  
united in a perfect harmony.  
Once upon a time gold was the key to eternity.

"Nicholas Flamel was born in Paris on September 28, 1330. Nearly seven hundred years later, he is acknowledged as the greatest Alchemist of his day. It is said that he discovered the secret of eternal life. The records show that he died in 1418. But his tomb is empty. (...) The legend goes: Nicholas Flamel lives. But only because he has been making the elixir of life for centuries."

"Technically (and alchemically) speaking, gold is a soft, shiny, yellow, heavy, malleable, ductile metal. It is also a trivalent and a univalent which means it's a transitional metal. As a transitional metal, gold is symbolic of flexibility on our spiritual path while life experience galvanizes our faith. One of the more valued elements, gold represents perfection in all matter, on any level. It also symbolizes humankind's quest to perfect, illuminate and refine his/herself. Because of its resistance to heat and acid, gold is a symbol of immutability, eternity and perfection. And because of its golden color, it is almost universally associated with solar symbolism."

Once upon a time I was searching for the perfect substance. I was half way down to the core of earth and saw the ages passing by on my way.

Once upon a time I went through earth and fire until I turned, empty handed. I hit the surface of the ocean and took a breath of air.

Once upon a time I had aged.

Once upon a time I woke up, with a golden ring in my hand.



"The trip to the underworld is a mytheme of comparative mythology found in a diverse number of religions from around the world. The hero or upper-world deity journeys to the underworld or to the land of the dead and returns, often with a quest-object or a loved one, or with heightened knowledge. (...) A deity who returns from the underworld demonstrates eschatological themes such as the cyclical nature of time and existence, or the defeat of death and the possibility of immortality."

"The symbol for gold was [for the alchemists] the circle with a point at its center (☉), which was also the astrological symbol and the ancient Chinese character for the Sun."

"The ideal final state of material is achieved when the elements are arranged according to the degrees of their density: (from outside to inside) Earth, Water, Air and Fire. In the center appears the sun, gold."

Once upon a time someone said there can't be a beginning.

Once upon a time someone said there can't be an end.

Once upon a time we wouldn't have had to dig.

Once upon a time we already had what we was searching for.

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