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Pushkin for the internet age

On this day in 1836, Alexander Pushkin finished one of his most famous poems, known in English as Exegi Monumentum and Russian as "I've raised a monument to myself not wrought by hands." (See here for [English](#), [Russian](#) and [Czech](#).) The poem, which was inspired by [Horace](#) and [Derzhavin](#), translates well into the internet age, when most everyone is erecting a small monument to himself on social networks, with the hope that the path to them will never be overgrown. Few of these monuments will be as lasting as Pushkin's, who seemed to predict accurately in his verses that tidings of him would resound for ages. He was tooting his own horn, or "liking" his own post. Or was he being subtly ironic, as [Vladimir Nabokov](#) suggested? When Pushkin wrote in the last stanza that we should treat the laurels and barbs of our reviewers with the same indifference, he was speaking true words of internet wisdom. But when he said that we should never argue with a fool, he left open the possibility that the real fool he meant was the one we see in our reflection.

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