

New Poems

William Butler Yeats

Table of Contents

<u>New Poems</u>	1
<u>William Butler Yeats</u>	1
<u>The Gyres</u>	1
<u>Lapis Lazuli</u>	2
<u>Imitated From The Japanese</u>	4
<u>Sweet Dancer</u>	4
<u>The Three Bushes</u>	4
<u>The Lady's First Song</u>	6
<u>The Lady's Second Song</u>	7
<u>The Lady's Third Song</u>	8
<u>The Lover's Song</u>	8
<u>The Chambermaid's First Song</u>	8
<u>The Chambermaid's Second Song</u>	9
<u>An Acre Of Grass</u>	9
<u>What Then?</u>	10
<u>Beautiful Lofty Things</u>	10
<u>A Crazy Girl</u>	11
<u>To Dorothy Wellesley</u>	11
<u>The Curse Of Cromwell</u>	12
<u>Roger Casement</u>	13
<u>The Ghost Of Roger Casement</u>	14
<u>The O'Rahilly</u>	15
<u>Come Gather Round Me, Parnellites</u>	16
<u>The Wild Old Wicked Man</u>	17
<u>The Great Day</u>	19
<u>Parnell</u>	19
<u>What Was Lost</u>	19
<u>The Spur</u>	19
<u>A Drunken Man's Praise of Sobriety</u>	20
<u>The Pilgrim</u>	20
<u>Colonel Martin</u>	21
<u>A Model For The Laureate</u>	23
<u>The Old Stone Cross</u>	24
<u>The Spirit Medium</u>	25
<u>Those Images</u>	25
<u>The Municipal Gallery Revisited</u>	26
<u>Are You Content?</u>	28

New Poems

William Butler Yeats

This page copyright © 2001 Blackmask Online.
<http://www.blackmask.com>

- [The Gyres](#)
 - [Lapis Lazuli](#)
 - [Imitated From The Japanese](#)
 - [Sweet Dancer](#)
 - [The Three Bushes](#)
 - [The Lady's First Song](#)
 - [The Lady's Second Song](#)
 - [The Lady's Third Song](#)
 - [The Lover's Song](#)
 - [The Chambermaid's First Song](#)
 - [The Chambermaid's Second Song](#)
 - [An Acre Of Grass](#)
 - [What Then?](#)
 - [Beautiful Lofty Things](#)
 - [A Crazyed Girl](#)
 - [To Dorothy Wellesley](#)
 - [The Curse Of Cromwell](#)
 - [Roger Casement](#)
 - [The Ghost Of Roger Casement](#)
 - [The O'Rahilly](#)
 - [Come Gather Round Me, Parnellites](#)
 - [The Wild Old Wicked Man](#)
 - [The Great Day](#)
 - [Parnell](#)
 - [What Was Lost](#)
 - [The Spur](#)
 - [A Drunken Man's Praise of Sobriety](#)
 - [The Pilgrim](#)
 - [Colonel Martin](#)
 - [A Model For The Laureate](#)
 - [The Old Stone Cross](#)
 - [The Spirit Medium](#)
 - [Those Images](#)
 - [The Municipal Gallery Revisited](#)
 - [Are You Content?](#)
-

The Gyres

THE GYRES! the gyres! Old Rocky Face, look forth;

New Poems

Things thought too long can be no longer thought,
For beauty dies of beauty, worth of worth,
And ancient lineaments are blotted out.
Irrational streams of blood are staining earth;
Empedocles has thrown all things about;
Hector is dead and there's a light in Troy;
We that look on but laugh in tragic joy.

What matter though numb nightmare ride on top,
And blood and mire the sensitive body stain?
What matter? Heave no sigh, let no tear drop,
A—greater, a more gracious time has gone;
For painted forms or boxes of make-up
In ancient tombs I sighed, but not again;
What matter? Out of cavern comes a voice,
And all it knows is that one word "Rejoice!"

Conduct and work grow coarse, and coarse the soul,
What matter? Those that Rocky Face holds dear,
Lovers of horses and of women, shall,
From marble of a broken sepulchre,
Or dark betwixt the polecat and the owl,
Or any rich, dark nothing disinter
The workman, noble and saint, and all things run
On that unfashionable gyre again.

Lapis Lazuli

(For Harry Clifton)

I HAVE heard that hysterical women say
They are sick of the palette and fiddle-bow.
Of poets that are always gay,
For everybody knows or else should know
That if nothing drastic is done
Aeroplane and Zeppelin will come out.
Pitch like King Billy bomb-balls in
Until the town lie beaten flat.

All perform their tragic play,
There struts Hamlet, there is Lear,
That's Ophelia, that Cordelia;
Yet they, should the last scene be there,
The great stage curtain about to drop,

New Poems

If worthy their prominent part in the play,
Do not break up their lines to weep.
They know that Hamlet and Lear are gay;
Gaiety transfiguring all that dread.
All men have aimed at, found and lost;
Black out; Heaven blazing into the head:
Tragedy wrought to its uttermost.
Though Hamlet rambles and Lear rages,
And all the drop-scenes drop at once
Upon a hundred thousand stages,
It cannot grow by an inch or an ounce.

On their own feet they came, or On shipboard,'
Camel-back; horse-back, ass-back, mule-back,
Old civilisations put to the sword.
Then they and their wisdom went to rack:
No handiwork of Callimachus,
Who handled marble as if it were bronze,
Made draperies that seemed to rise
When sea-wind swept the corner, stands;
His long lamp-chimney shaped like the stem
Of a slender palm, stood but a day;
All things fall and are built again,
And those that build them again are gay.

Two Chinamen, behind them a third,
Are carved in lapis lazuli,
Over them flies a long-legged bird,
A symbol of longevity;
The third, doubtless a serving-man,
Carries a musical instrument.

Every discoloration of the stone,
Every accidental crack or dent,
Seems a water-course or an avalanche,
Or lofty slope where it still snows
Though doubtless plum or cherry-branch
Sweetens the little half-way house
Those Chinamen climb towards, and I
Delight to imagine them seated there;
There, on the mountain and the sky,
On all the tragic scene they stare.
One asks for mournful melodies;
Accomplished fingers begin to play.
Their eyes mid many wrinkles, their eyes,
Their ancient, glittering eyes, are gay.

Imitated From The Japanese

A MOST astonishing thing –
Seventy years have I lived;

(Hurrah for the flowers of Spring,
For Spring is here again.)

Seventy years have I lived
No ragged beggar–man,
Seventy years have I lived,
Seventy years man and boy,
And never have I danced for joy.

Sweet Dancer

THE girl goes dancing there
On the leaf–sown, new–mown, smooth
Grass plot of the garden;
Escaped from bitter youth,
Escaped out of her crowd,
Or out of her black cloud.
Ah, dancer, ah, sweet dancer.!

If strange men come from the house
To lead her away, do not say
That she is happy being crazy;
Lead them gently astray;
Let her finish her dance,
Let her finish her dance.
Ah, dancer, ah, sweet dancer.!

The Three Bushes

New Poems

An incident from the `Historia mei Temporis'
of the Abbe Michel de Bourdeille

SAID lady once to lover,
"None can rely upon
A love that lacks its proper food;
And if your love were gone
How could you sing those songs of love?
I should be blamed, young man.
O my dear, O my dear.

Have no lit candles in your room,'
That lovely lady said,
"That I at midnight by the clock
May creep into your bed,
For if I saw myself creep in
I think I should drop dead.'
O my dear, O my dear.

"I love a man in secret,
Dear chambermaid,' said she.
"I know that I must drop down dead
If he stop loving me,
Yet what could I but drop down dead
If I lost my chastity?
O my dear, O my dear.

"So you must lie beside him
And let him think me there.
And maybe we are all the same
Where no candles are,
And maybe we are all the same
That stip the body bare.'
O my dear, O my dear.
But no dogs barked, and midnights chimed,
And through the chime she'd say,
"That was a lucky thought of mine,
My lover. looked so gay';
But heaved a sigh if the chambermaid
Looked half asleep all day.
O my dear, O my dear.

"No, not another song,' said he,
"Because my lady came
A year ago for the first time
At midnight to my room,
And I must lie between the sheets
When the clock begins to chime.'
O my dear, O my dear.

"A laughing, crying, sacred song,

Imitated From The Japanese

A leching song,' they said.
Did ever men hear such a song?
No, but that day they did.
Did ever man ride such a race?
No, not until he rode.
O my dear, O my dear.

But when his horse had put its hoof
Into a rabbit-hole
He dropped upon his head and died.
His lady saw it all
And dropped and died thereon, for she
Loved him with her soul.
O my dear, O my dear.
The chambermaid lived long, and took
Their graves into her charge,
And there two bushes planted
That when they had grown large
Seemed sprung from but a single root
So did their roses merge.
O my dear, O my dear.

When she was old and dying,
The priest came where she was;
She made a full confession.
Long looked he in her face,
And O he was a good man
And understood her case.
O my dear, O my dear.

He bade them take and bury her
Beside her lady's man,
And set a rose-tree on her grave,
And now none living can,
When they have plucked a rose there,
Know where its roots began.
O my dear, O my dear.

The Lady's First Song

I TURN round
Like a dumb beast in a show.
Neither know what I am

Nor where I go,
My language beaten
Into one name;
I am in love
And that is my shame.
What hurts the soul
My soul adores,
No better than a beast
Upon all fours.

The Lady's Second Song

WHAT sort of man is coming
To lie between your feet?
What matter, we are but women.
Wash; make your body sweet;
I have cupboards of dried fragrance.
I can strew the sheet.
The Lord have mercy upon us.

He shall love my soul as though
Body were not at all,
He shall love your body
Untroubled by the soul,
Love cram love's two divisions
Yet keep his substance whole.
The Lord have mercy upon us.

Soul must learn a love that is
proper to my breast,
Limbs a Love in common
With every noble beast.
If soul may look and body touch,
Which is the more blest?
The Lord have mercy upon us.

The Lady's Third Song

WHEN you and my true lover meet
And he plays tunes between your feet.
Speak no evil of the soul,
Nor think that body is the whole,
For I that am his daylight lady
Know worse evil of the body;
But in honour split his love
Till either neither have enough,
That I may hear if we should kiss
A contrapuntal serpent hiss,
You, should hand explore a thigh,
All the labouring heavens sigh.

The Lover's Song

BIRD sighs for the air,
Thought for I know not where,
For the womb the seed sighs.
Now sinks the same rest
On mind, on nest,
On straining thighs.

The Chambermaid's First Song

HOW came this ranger
Now sunk in rest,
Stranger with strangcr.
On my cold breast?
What's left to Sigh for?
Strange night has come;
God's love has hidden him
Out of all harm,

Pleasure has made him
Weak as a worm.

The Chambermaid's Second Song

FROM pleasure of the bed,
Dull as a worm,
His rod and its butting head
Limp as a worm,
His spirit that has fled
Blind as a worm.

An Acre Of Grass

PICTURE and book remain,
An acre of green grass
For air and exercise,
Now strength of body goes;
Midnight, an old house
Where nothing stirs but a mouse.

My temptation is quiet.
Here at life's end
Neither loose imagination,
Nor the mill of the mind
Consuming its rag and bone,
Can make the truth known.

Grant me an old man's frenzy,
Myself must I remake
Till I am Timon and Lear
Or that William Blake
Who beat upon the wall
Till Truth obeyed his call;

A mind Michael Angelo knew

That can pierce the clouds,
Or inspired by frenzy
Shake the dead in their shrouds;
Forgotten else by mankind,
An old man's eagle mind.

What Then?

HIS chosen comrades thought at school
He must grow a famous man;
He thought the same and lived by rule,
All his twenties crammed with toil;
"What then?" sang Plato's ghost. "What then?"

Everything he wrote was read,
After certain years he won
Sufficient money for his need,
Friends that have been friends indeed;
"What then?" sang Plato's ghost. "What then?"

All his happier dreams came true –
A small old house, wife, daughter, son,
Grounds where plum and cabbage grew,
poets and Wits about him drew;
"What then.?" sang Plato's ghost. "What then?"

The work is done,' grown old he thought,
"According to my boyish plan;
Let the fools rage, I swerved in naught,
Something to perfection brought';
But louder sang that ghost, "What then?"

Beautiful Lofty Things

BEAUTIFUL lofty things: O'Leary's noble head;
My father upon the Abbey stage, before him a raging crowd:

What Then?

New Poems

"This Land of Saints,' and then as the applause died out,
"Of plaster Saints'; his beautiful mischievous head thrown back.
Standish O'Grady supporting himself between the tables
Speaking to a drunken audience high nonsensical words;
Augusta Gregory seated at her great ormolu table,
Her eightieth winter approaching: "Yesterday he threatened my life.
I told him that nightly from six to seven I sat at this table,
The blinds drawn up'; Maud Gonne at Howth station waiting a train,
Pallas Athene in that straight back and arrogant head:
All the Olympians; a thing never known again.

A Crazy Girl

THAT crazed girl improvising her music.
Her poetry, dancing upon the shore,
Her soul in division from itself
Climbing, falling She knew not where,
Hiding amid the cargo of a steamship,
Her knee-cap broken, that girl I declare
A beautiful lofty thing, or a thing
Heroically lost, heroically found.

No matter what disaster occurred
She stood in desperate music wound,
Wound, wound, and she made in her triumph
Where the bales and the baskets lay
No common intelligible sound
But sang, "O sea-starved, hungry sea.'

To Dorothy Wellesley

STRETCH towards the moonless midnight of the trees,
As though that hand could reach to where they stand,
And they but famous old upholsteries
Delightful to the touch; tighten that hand
As though to draw them closer yet.

Rammed full

Of that most sensuous silence of the night
(For since the horizon's bought strange dogs are still)
Climb to your chamber full of books and wait,
No books upon the knee, and no one there
But a Great Dane that cannot bay the moon
And now lies sunk in sleep.

What climbs the stair?

Nothing that common women ponder on
If you are worrh my hope! Neither Content
Nor satisfied Conscience, but that great family
Some ancient famous authors mistepresent,
The proud Furies each with her torch on high.

The Curse Of Cromwell

YOU ask what – I have found, and far and wide I go:
Nothing but Cromwell's house and Cromwell's murderous crew,
The lovers and the dancers are beaten into the clay,
And the tall men and the swordsmen and the horsemen, where are they?
And there is an old beggar wandering in his pride – –
His fathers served their fathers before Christ was crucified.

O what of that, O what of that,
What is there left to say?

All neighbourly content and easy talk are gone,
But there's no good complaining, for money's rant is on.
He that's mounting up must on his neighbour mount,
And we and all the Muses are things of no account.
They have schooling of their own, but I pass their schooling by,
What can they know that we know that know the time to die?

O what of that, O what of that,
What is there left to say?

But there's another knowledge that my heart destroys,
As the fox in the old fable destroyed the Spartan boy's
Because it proves that things both can and cannot be;
That the swordsmen and the ladies can still keep company,
Can pay the poet for a verse and hear the fiddle sound,
That I am still their setvant though all are underground.

O what of that, O what of that,
What is there left to say?

I came on a great house in the middle of the night,
Its open lighted doorway and its windows all alight,
And all my friends were there and made me welcome too;
But I woke in an old ruin that the winds howled through;
And when I pay attention I must out and walk
Among the dogs and horses that understand my talk.
 O what of that, O what of that,
 What is there left to say?

Roger Casement

(After reading 'The Forged Casement Diaries' by Dr. Maloney)

I SAY that Roger Casement
Did what he had to do.
He died upon the gallows,
But that is nothing new.

Afraid they might be beaten
Before the bench of Time,
They turned a trick by forgery
And blackened his good name.

A perjurer stood ready
To prove their forgery true;
They gave it out to all the world,
And that is something new;

For Spring Rice had to whisper it,
Being their Ambassador,
And then the speakers got it
And writers by the score.

Come Tom and Dick, come all the troop
That cried it far and wide,
Come from the forger and his desk,
Desert the perjurer's side;

Come speak your bit in public

That some amends be made
To this most gallant gentleman
That is in quicklime laid.

The Ghost Of Roger Casement

O WHAT has made that sudden noise?
What on the threshold stands?
It never crossed the sea because
John Bull and the sea are friends;
But this is not the old sea
Nor this the old seashore.
What gave that roar of mockery,
That roar in the sea's roar?

The ghost of Roger Casement
Is beating on the door.

John Bull has stood for Parliament,
A dog must have his day,
The country thinks no end of him,
For he knows how to say,
At a beanfeast or a banquet,
That all must hang their trust
Upon the British Empire,
Upon the Church of Christ.

The ghost of Roger Casement
Is beating on the door.

John Bull has gone to India
And all must pay him heed,
For histories are there to prove
That none of another breed
Has had a like inheritance,
Or sucked such milk as he,
And there's no luck about a house
If it lack honesty.

The ghost of Roger Casement
Is beating on the door.

I poked about a village church
And found his family tomb
And copied out what I could read
In that religious gloom;
Found many a famous man there;
But fame and virtue rot.
Draw round, beloved and bitter men,
Draw round and raise a shout;

The ghost of Roger Casement
Is beating on the door.

The O'Rahilly

SING of the O'Rahilly,
Do not deny his right;
Sing a "the' before his name;
Allow that he, despite
All those learned historians,
Established it for good;
He wrote out that word himself,
He christened himself with blood.
How goes the weather?

Sing of the O'Rahilly
That had such little sense
He told Pearse and Connolly
He'd gone to great expense
Keeping all the Kerry men
Out of that crazy fight;
That he might be there himself
Had travelled half the night.
How goes the weather?

"Am I such a craven that
I should not get the word
But for what some travelling man
Had heard I had not heard?"
Then on Pearse and Connolly
He fixed a bitter look:

"Because I helped to wind the clock
I come to hear it strike.'
How goes the weather?

What remains to sing about
But of the death he met
Stretched under a doorway
Somewhere off Henry Street;
They that found him found upon
The door above his head
"Here died the O'Rahilly.
R.I.P.' writ in blood.
How goes the weather.?

Come Gather Round Me, Parnellites

COME gather round me, Parnellites,
And praise our chosen man;
Stand upright on your legs awhile,
Stand upright while you can,
For soon we lie where he is laid,
And he is underground;
Come fill up all those glasses
And pass the bottle round.

And here's a cogent reason,
And I have many more,
He fought the might of England
And saved the Irish poor,
Whatever good a farmer's got
He brought it all to pass;
And here's another reason,
That Parnell loved a lass.

And here's a final reason,
He was of such a kind
Every man that sings a song
Keeps Parnell in his mind.
For Parnell was a proud man,
No prouder trod the ground,
And a proud man's a lovely man,

So pass the bottle round.

The Bishops and the party
That tragic story made,
A husband that had sold his wife
And after that betrayed;
But stories that live longest
Are sung above the glass,
And Parnell loved his country
And Parnell loved his lass.

The Wild Old Wicked Man

BECAUSE I am mad about women
I am mad about the hills,'
Said that wild old wicked man
Who travels where God wills.
"Not to die on the straw at home.
Those hands to close these eyes,
That is all I ask, my dear,
From the old man in the skies.
Daybreak and a candle—end.

"Kind are all your words, my dear,
Do not the rest withhold.
Who can know the year, my dear,
when an old man's blood grows cold?'
I have what no young man can have
Because he loves too much.
Words I have that can pierce the heart,
But what can he do but touch?'
Daybreak and a candle—end.

Then Said she to that wild old man,
His stout stick under his hand,
"Love to give or to withhold
Is not at my command.
I gave it all to an older man:
That old man in the skies.
Hands that are busy with His beads
Can never close those eyes.'

New Poems

Daybreak and a candle–end.

"Go your ways, O go your ways,
I choose another mark,
Girls down on the seashore
Who understand the dark;
Bawdy talk for the fishermen;
A dance for the fisher–lads;
When dark hangs upon the water
They turn down their beds.
Daybreak and a candle–end.

"A young man in the dark am I,
But a wild old man in the light,
That can make a cat laugh, or
Can touch by mother wit
Things hid in their marrow–bones
From time long passed away,
Hid from all those warty lads
That by their bodies lay.
Daybreak and a candle–end.

"All men live in suffering,
I know as few can know,
Whether they take the upper road
Or stay content on the low,
Rower bent in his row–boat
Or weaver bent at his loom,
Horseman erect upon horseback
Or child hid in the womb.
Daybreak and a candle–end.

"That some stream of lightning
From the old man in the skies
Can burn out that suffering
No right–taught man denies.
But a coarse old man am I,
I choose the second–best,
I forget it all awhile
Upon a woman's breast.'
Daybreak and a candle–end.

The Great Day

HURRAH for revolution and more cannon–shot!
A beggar upon horseback lashes a beggar on foot.
Hurrah for revolution and cannon come again!
The beggars have changed places, but the lash goes on.

Parnell

PARNELL came down the road, he said to a cheering man:
"Ireland shall get her freedom and you still break stone.

What Was Lost

I SING what was lost and dread what was won,
I walk in a battle fought over again,
My king a lost king, and lost soldiers my men;
Feet to the Rising and Setting may run,
They always beat on the same small stone.

The Spur

YOU think it horrible that lust and rage

Should dance attention upon my old age;
They were not such a plague when I was young;
What else have I to spur me into song?

A Drunken Man's Praise of Sobriety

COME swish around, my pretty punk,
And keep me dancing still
That I may stay a sober man
Although I drink my fill.

Sobriety is a jewel
That I do much adore;
And therefore keep me dancing
Though drunkards lie and snore.
O mind your feet, O mind your feet,
Keep dancing like a wave,
And under every dancer
A dead man in his grave.
No ups and downs, my pretty,
A mermaid, not a punk;
A drunkard is a dead man,
And all dead men are drunk.

The Pilgrim

I FASTED for some forty days on bread and buttermilk,
For passing round the bottle with girls in rags or silk,
In country shawl or Paris cloak, had put my wits astray,
And what's the good of women, for all that they can say
Is fol de rol de rolly O.

New Poems

Round Lough Derg's holy island I went upon the stones,
I prayed at all the Stations upon my matrow-bones,
And there I found an old man, and though, I prayed all day
And that old man beside me, nothing would he say
But fol de rol de rolly O.

All know that all the dead in the world about that place are stuck,
And that should mother seek her son she'd have but little luck
Because the fires of purgatory have ate their shapes away;
I swear to God I questioned them, and all they had to say
Was fol de rol de rolly O.

A great black ragged bird appeared when I was in the boat;
Some twenty feet from tip to tip had it stretched rightly out,
With flopping and with flapping it made a great display,
But I never stopped to question, what could the boatman say
But fol de rol de rolly O.

Now I am in the public-house and lean upon the wall,
So come in rags or come in silk, in cloak or country shawl,
And come with learned lovers or with what men you may,
For I can put the whole lot down, and all I have to say
Is fol de rol de rolly O.

Colonel Martin

I

THE Colonel went out sailing,
He spoke with Turk and Jew,
With Christian and with Infidel,
For all tongues he knew.
"O what's a wifeless man?" said he,
And he came sailing home.
He rose the latch and went upstairs
And found an empty room.
The Colonel went out sailing.

II

"I kept her much in the country

New Poems

And she was much alone,
And though she may be there,' he said,
"She may be in the town.
She may be all alone there,
For who can say?' he said.
"I think that I shall find her
In a young man's bed.'
The Colonel went out sailing.

III

The Colonel met a pedlar,
Agreed their clothes to swop,
And bought the grandest jewelry
In a Galway shop,
Instead of thread and needle
put jewelry in the pack,
Bound a thong about his hand,
Hitched it on his back.
The Colonel went out sailing.

IV

The Colonel knocked on the rich man's door,
"I am sorry,' said the maid,
"My mistress cannot see these things,
But she is still abed,
And never have I looked upon
Jewelry so grand.'
"Take all to your mistress,'
And he laid them on her hand.
The Colonel went out sailing.

V

And he went in and she went on
And both climbed up the stair,
And O he was a clever man,
For he his slippers wore.
And when they came to the top stair
He ran on ahead,
His wife he found and the rich man
In the comfort of a bed.
The Colonel went out sailing.

VI

New Poems

The Judge at the Assize Court,
When he heard that story told,
Awarded him for damages
Three kegs of gold.
The Colonel said to Tom his man,
"Harness an ass and cart,
Carry the gold about the town,
Throw it in every patt.'
The Colonel went out sailing.

VII

And there at all street–corners
A man with a pistol stood,
And the rich man had paid them well
To shoot the Colonel dead;
But they threw down their pistols
And all men heard them swear
That they could never shoot a man
Did all that for the poor.
The Colonel went out sailing.

VIII

"And did you keep no gold, Tom?
You had three kegs,' said he.
"I never thought of that, Sir.'
"Then want before you die.'
And want he did; for my own grand–dad
Saw the story's end,
And Tom make out a living
From the seaweed on the strand.
The Colonel went out sailing.

A Model For The Laureate

ON thrones from China to Peru
All sorts of kings have sat
That men and women of all sorts
proclaimed both good and great;
And what's the odds if such as these
For reason of the State

Should keep their lovers waiting,
Keep their lovers waiting?

Some boast of beggar-kings and kings
Of rascals black and white
That rule because a strong right arm
Puts all men in a fright,
And drunk or sober live at ease
Where none gainsay their right,
And keep their lovers waiting,
Keep their lovers waiting.

The Muse is mute when public men
Applaud a modern throne:
Those cheers that can be bought or sold,
That office fools have run,
That waxen seal, that signature.
For things like these what decent man
Would keep his lover waiting,
Keep his lover waiting?

The Old Stone Cross

A STATESMAN is an easy man,
He tells his lies by rote;
A journalist makes up his lies
And takes you by the throat;
So stay at home' and drink your beer
And let the neighbours' vote,
Said the man in the golden breastplate
Under the old stone Cross.

Because this age and the next age
Engender in the ditch,
No man can know a happy man
From any passing wretch;
If Folly link with Elegance
No man knows which is which,
Said the man in the golden breastplate
Under the old stone Cross.

But actors lacking music

Do most excite my spleen,
They say it is more human
To shuffle, grunt and groan,
Not knowing what unearthly stuff
Rounds a mighty scene,
Said the man in the golden breastplate
Under the old stone Cross.

The Spirit Medium

POETRY, music, I have loved, and yet
Because of those new dead
That come into my soul and escape
Confusion of the bed,
Or those begotten or unbegotten
Perning in a band,
"I bend my body to the spade
Or grope with a dirty hand."
Or those begotten or unbegotten,
For I would not recall
Some that being unbegotten
Are not individual,
But copy some one action,
Moulding it of dust or sand,
(I bend my body to the spade
Or grope with a dirty hand.)
An old ghost's thoughts are lightning,
To follow is to die;
Poetry and music I have banished,
But the stupidity
Of root, shoot, blossom or clay
Makes no demand.
(I bend my body to the spade
Or grope with a dirty hand.)

Those Images

WHAT if I bade you leave
The cavern of the mind?
There's better exercise
In the sunlight and wind.

I never bade you go
To Moscow or to Rome.
Renounce that drudgery,
Call the Muses home.

Seek those images
That constitute the wild,
The lion and the virgin,
The harlot and the child.

Find in middle air
An eagle on the wing,
Recognise the five
That make the Muses sing.

The Municipal Gallery Revisited

I

AROUND me the images of thirty years:
An ambush; pilgrims at the water-side;
Casement upon trial, half hidden by the bars,
Guarded; Griffith staring in hysterical pride;
Kevin O'Higgins' countenance that wears
A gentle questioning look that cannot hide
A soul incapable of remorse or rest;
A revolutionary soldier kneeling to be blessed;

II

An Abbot or Archbishop with an upraised hand
Blessing the Tricolour. "This is not,' I say,
"The dead Ireland of my youth, but an Ireland
The poets have imagined, terrible and gay.'
Before a woman's portrait suddenly I stand,
Beautiful and gentle in her Venetian way.

New Poems

I met her all but fifty years ago
For twenty minutes in some studio.

III

Heart-smitten with emotion I Sink down,
My heart recovering with covered eyes;
Wherever I had looked I had looked upon
My permanent or impermanent images:
Augusta Gregory's son; her sister's son,
Hugh Lane, "onlie begetter' of all these;
Hazel Lavery living and dying, that tale
As though some ballad-singer had sung it all;

IV

Mancini's portrait of Augusta Gregory,
"Greatest since Rembrandt,' according to John Synge;
A great ebullient portrait certainly;
But where is the brush that could show anything
Of all that pride and that humility?
And I am in despair that time may bring
Approved patterns of women or of men
But not that selfsame excellence again.

V

My mediaeval knees lack health until they bend,
But in that woman, in that household where
Honour had lived so long, all lacking found.
Childless I thought, "My children may find here
Deep-rooted things,' but never foresaw its end,
And now that end has come I have not wept;
No fox can foul the lair the badger swept –

VI

(An image out of Spenser and the common tongue).
John Synge, I and Augusta Gregory, thought
All that we did, all that we said or sang
Must come from contact with the soil, from that
Contact everything Antaeus-like grew strong.
We three alone in modern times had brought
Everything down to that sole test again,
Dream of the noble and the beggar-man.

VII

And here's John Synge himself, that rooted man,
"Forgetting human words,' a grave deep face.
You that would judge me, do not judge alone
This book or that, come to this hallowed place
Where my friends' portraits hang and look thereon;
Ireland's history in their lineaments trace;
Think where man's glory most begins and ends,
And say my glory was I had such friends.

Are You Content?

I CALL on those that call me son,
Grandson, or great-grandson,
On uncles, aunts, great-uncles or great-aunts,
To judge what I have done.
Have I, that put it into words,
Spoilt what old loins have sent?
Eyes spiritualised by death can judge,
I cannot, but I am not content.

He that in Sligo at Drumcliff
Set up the old stone Cross,
That red-headed rector in County Down,
A good man on a horse,
Sandymount Corbets, that notable man
Old William pollexfen,
The smuggler Middleton, Butlers far back,
Half legendary men.

Infirm and aged I might stay
In some good company,
I who have always hated work,
Smiling at the sea,
Or demonstrate in my own life
What Robert Browning meant
By an old hunter talking with Gods;
But I am not content.