

Y. is not immersed in the nature described in the previous stanzas, but he finds himself on the streets of London or on the grey pavements. However, he still hears the noise of the water lapping by the shore deep in his heart → Combination of the physical perception of the noise of the water with the emotional one (heart's core).

Introduction to the poem

The poem combines 2 different elements:

- The poet's love for Henry David Thoreau, an American writer who experienced a life of solitude in the woods. As Yeats had read about this experience, he expressed his desire to live a similar one. Y. longed for himself "a life of austerity" → Reference to a life based on simplicity in solitude far from the confusion and hassle of city life. He had this desire in his teens.
- Then, when he was a little older (in the last 2 verses) he expresses the fact that, while he was walking on a grey pavement, he remembers the past. He explains what stimulates this memory: he is front of a shop window and he sees a fountain with a tinkle of water and on top of it a little ball. In this way, he remembers the water lapping on the shore on the Isle of Innisfree and this sudden vision awakens in him the memory of the past → In the deep of his heart he feels the sweetness related to his experience on Innisfree (detachment from the confusion of daily life, comfort)

THE WILD SWANS AT COOLE → Middle phase of Y. (still quite romantic)

Yeats refers to an experience he had at Coole. The wild swans are an element of nature (still immersed in nature). Yeats describes the effect that the memory of the swans by the lake, which makes him have this experience a second time, will cause in him.

There is a new theme in the poem related to the idea of the passing of time, getting old and losing what we have in our younger years. The first visit at Coole was 19 years before he writes the poem and he remembers that there were 59 swans by the lake. Ideally, he refers to this great number of swans which represent the beauty of nature and life.

The very end of the poem is when the swans have that mystery and beauty in themselves which he cannot explain. He asks himself what he will feel like the day he will realize the swans have flown to another place → Not being able to see the swans anymore implies the idea of the loss of something: symbolic image. The swans caused pleasure to the poet and the other human beings. The hearts of the swans do not grow old (≠ people): they are the symbol for the circular movement of nature, which renews itself year after year. Human beings, instead, grow older.

Need to look for a way out, a solution to men's limited experience → One of Y's themes. Here, the poem closes with a question → We don't know whether he is already able to give an answer to himself, but probably not yet. However, the answer to the question will be given in "Sailing to Bisanzio" → Ability to overcome this existential doubt in the world of art, which gives eternity to the poet's achievement and the poet himself.