

Leda and the Swan

FORM AND STRUCTURE	- First stanza 8 lines = Octave - Second stanza 7 lines = Sestet - It's like a sonnet, which are conventionally love poems, so Yeats is playing against convention - Power of the visual narrative of the poem		
CONTEXT	- Written 1923 - Swan = associated with mythology, in Ireland represents freedom of the spirit - Myth: Zeus disguised himself as a Swan to get close to Leda and then raped her - Yeats compared the impregnation of Leda to the impregnation of Mary, Mary impregnated by God and Leda by Zeus, creativity can be paradoxical as it also causes destruction (the broken wall) and the destruction that came in the wake of Christianity		
THEMES	<u>Power</u>	<u>The Erotic</u>	<u>Mythology</u>
QUOTES AND ANALYSIS	'A sudden blow: the great wings beating still Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,' - Adjective 'great' shows the natural power of the bird, the idea of this beautiful but violent creature - Noun 'girl' suggests she is vulnerable to his predatory behaviour - 'Beating' = Yeats referring to the power of males to cause pain + subordinate women - 'Nape' = often carry children by the nape of their neck, reiterating her vulnerability/inability to stop the swan 'How can those terrified vague fingers push The feathered glory from her loosening	'Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed - Verb 'caressed' creates a seductive, almost intimate image The duality of the role of the powerful male 'By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,' - 'Nape' = tender, vulnerable place, Yeats shows that she is trapped whilst creating this erotic image 'The feathered glory from her loosening thighs?' - 'Loosening things' = sibilance is a development of that eroticism 'And how can body, laid in that white rush'	'A sudden blow: the great wings beating still' - 'Beating' = present participle ending shows relevance to the present, it's not just in the past, continuous 'The broken wall, the burning roof and tower And Agamemnon dead.' - Reference to Troy, idea of destruction, lust, power, which are attributes of the male - Idea of women as a possession, being transferred from one place to another w/out agreement of