

## The Second Coming

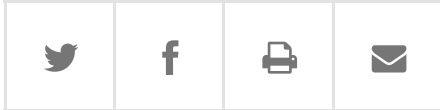
BY [WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS](#)

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;  
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.  
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out  
When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*  
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert  
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,  
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,  
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it  
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.  
The darkness drops again; but now I know  
That twenty centuries of stony sleep  
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,  
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,  
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

n/a

Source: *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (1989)



### Related

#### COLLECTION

### Poems of Anxiety and Uncertainty

Confronting and coping with uncharted terrains through poetry.

[Read More](#)

#### COLLECTION

### An Introduction to Modernism

The monumental artistic movement that changed poetry forever.

[Read More](#)

#### AUDIO

Play Episode 

### The Second Coming

FROM AUDIO POEM OF THE DAY | July 2020

By W.B. Yeats

[Read More](#)

#### MORE POEMS BY WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

### The Mountain Tomb

BY WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

### To a Child Dancing upon the Shore

BY WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

### Fallen Majesty

BY WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

### Love and the Bird

BY WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

### The Realists

BY WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

[See All Poems by this Author](#) 

#### POEMS

Poems for Children

Poems for Teens

Poem Guides

Audio Poems

#### POETS

#### PROSE

Harriet Blog

#### COLLECTIONS

#### LISTEN

#### LEARN

Children

Teens

Adults

Educators

Glossary of Poetic Terms

#### VISIT

Events

Exhibitions

Library

#### POETRY MAGAZINE

Current Issue

Poetry Magazine Archive

Subscriptions

About the Magazine

How to Submit

Advertise with Us

#### ABOUT US

Give

Foundation Awards

Media

Partnerships

Poetry Out Loud

People

Jobs



 Poetry Foundation Children

 Poetry Magazine

[CONTACT US](#) [NEWSLETTERS](#) [PRESS](#) [PRIVACY POLICY](#) [POLICIES](#) [TERMS OF USE](#) [POETRY MOBILE APP](#)

61 West Superior Street, Chicago, IL 60654 Hours: Monday-Friday 11am - 4pm © 2020 Poetry Foundation

[See a problem on this page?](#)

### The Second Coming

BY WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

#### ABOUT THIS POET



William Butler Yeats is widely considered to be one of the greatest poets of the 20th century. He belonged to the Protestant, Anglo-Irish minority that had controlled the economic, political, social, and cultural life of Ireland since at least the end of the 17th century....

[Read Full Biography](#)

#### MORE ABOUT THIS POET

##### Region:

IRELAND & NORTHERN IRELAND

##### School/Period:

MODERN

##### Quick Tags



RELIGION

GOD & THE DIVINE

SOCIAL COMMENTARIES

HISTORY & POLITICS

MORE ABOUT THIS POEM ▾