

Yeats and the Poetry of Ireland

William Butler Yeats

was a poet, dramatist, and editor. Born in 1865 in Ireland, he was one of the architects of the Irish Literary Revival which encouraged Irish literature and drama. Yeats was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923. Below is one of his early poems "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" written in 1888. Innisfree is an uninhabited island in a lake in Ireland.

The Lake Isle of Innisfree

by W.B. Yeats

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey bee,
And live alone in the bee loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

Analysis

1. What do you think "the bee loud glade" means?

2. What does the phrase "pavements grey" tell you about where the poet is?

3. Why does the poet want to go to Innisfree?

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Analysis

Student answers will vary. Correct answers should reference the following:

1. What do you think "the bee loud glade" means?

Bees are humming loudly in a field or open space in the forest.

2. What does the phrase "pavements grey" tell you about where the poet is?

He's in the city.

3. Why does the poet want to go to Innisfree?

To get back to nature and find peace