



William Butler Yeats

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Thinking about Poem

I.

1. What kind of place is Innisfree? Think about:

- (i) the three things the poet wants to do when he goes back there (stanza I);
- (ii) what he hears and sees there and its effect on him (stanza II);
- (iii) what he hears in his “heart’s core” even when he is far away from Innisfree (stanza III).

Answer:

- 1. (i) (a) The poet wants to build a small cabin of clay and wattles.
- (b) He wants to plant nine rows of beans.
- (c) He wants to keep honey bees hive.
- (ii) (a) He hears the cricket’s song.
- (b) He holds linnets flying in the sky.
- (c) He sees glimmering midnight and glowing rooms.
- (iii) When the poet is far away from Innisfree he hears the sound of the lake water washing the shore in his “heart’s core”.

2. By now you may have concluded that Innisfree is a simple, natural place, full of beauty and peace. How does the poet contrast it with where he now stands? (Read stanza III).

Answer:

The poet contrasts the clay and wattle made cabin, bee loud glade, morning with dew and crickets songs, midnight with glimmer, noon with purple glow, evenings with linnet’s songs lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore etc.

3. Do you think Innisfree is only a place, or a state of mind? Does the poet actually miss the place of his boyhood days?

Answer:

Although Innisfree is the poet’s boyhood haunt, it also represents his state of mind. The poet wishes to escape to Innisfree as it is more peaceful than where he is now—the city. Innisfree is representative of what the poet considers an ideal place to live, which is devoid of the restless humdrum of his life.

Yes, the poet actually misses the place of his boyhood days. Even when he is away from Innisfree, he recalls the sound of the lake water washing the shore.

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