

Brief Questions in W. B. Yeats' Poems

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- What sense was W.B. Yeats called the National Poet of Ireland?

Ans:

By birth, temperament, and choice, Yeats became the poet of Irish tradition and was called the national poet of Ireland.

- What is I.R.B.?

Ans:

I.R.B. means the Irish Republican Brotherhood, a secret revolutionary party that Yeats joined in 1896.

- What kind of poem is “The Stolen Child”?

Ans:

“The Stolen Child” is an escape-lyric based on the Irish belief that fairies steal human children.

- What kind of life do the fairies live?

Ans:

The fairies live a merry and carefree life surrounded by nature’s beauty.

- What is the fairyland like?

Ans:

Fairyland is a leafy island where fairies dance, sing, and enjoy a dreamy life.

- What do you mean by “Rosses”?

Ans:

“Rosses” is a seaside village near Sligo where Yeats’s family spent their summers.

- **What is the theme of “When You Are Old”?**

Ans:

The poem shows the fleeting nature of love and human beauty.

- **How does Yeats imagine his beloved in old age?**

Ans

: He imagines Maud Gonne as an old woman reading his poems by the fireside.

- **What is “the pilgrim soul”?**

Ans:

It means a pure soul that comes to earth for a short sacred journey.

- **What would Maud Gonne murmur sadly about her love?**

Ans:

She would realize the poet’s true love and mourn his death with regret.

- **What is the theme of “The Man Who Dreamed of Fairyland”?**

Ans:

It shows a man escaping reality to live in dreams and imagination.

- **What happens in the maturity of the Irishman?**

Ans:

His mind turns to worries about money but his imagination flies to fairyland.

- **What happens in the Irishman’s grave after death?**

Ans:

His restless thoughts disturb his peace even in the grave.

- **What is “No Second Troy” about?**

Ans:

It is about Maud Gonne—Yeats’s beloved—whom he both admires and criticizes.

- **Why does Yeats criticize Maud Gonne?**

Ans:

He criticizes her for her indifference to him and her violent politics.

- **What kind of beauty does Maud Gonne have?**

Ans:

Her beauty is like a tightened bow, full of power and intensity.

- **How does Yeats show Maud Gonne's unique beauty?**

Ans:

He says her beauty is strong and active, like a bow ready to strike.

- **What is the theme of "September 1913"?**

Ans:

It expresses Yeats's anger at the greed and dullness of modern Ireland.

- **How does Yeats see present Ireland?**

Ans:

He sees it as materialistic and lifeless, far from romantic ideals.

- **Why was "September 1913" written?**

Ans:

Yeats wrote it after the Lane Gallery controversy in Ireland.

- **How did the Lane controversy arise?**

Ans:

It began when Hugh Lane's art collection faced opposition in Dublin.

- **What was the subtitle of "September 1913"?**

Ans:

It was "On Reading Much of the Correspondence against the Art Gallery."

- **Who is O'Leary?**

Ans:

John O'Leary was an Irish patriot and Fenian leader admired by Yeats.

- **How does Yeats pay tribute to O'Leary?**

Ans:

He says, "Romantic Ireland's dead and gone, it's with O'Leary in the grave."

- **What is "Greasy till"?**

Ans:

It means a shop drawer—symbolizing the money-minded Irish people.

- **What is "Kiltarton's Cross"?**

Ans:

It is a village near Coole Park, the home of Robert Gregory.

- **How would the Irish airman balance his life?**

Ans:

He finds life meaningless and sees death in war as equal to life.

- **Whom does the Irish airman guard?**

Ans:

He guards the English or possibly the Italians.

- **What is the theme of "A Prayer for My Daughter"?**

Ans:

It shows the poet's prayer for his daughter's safety and future happiness.

- **What is the name of Yeats's daughter?**

Ans:

Her name is Anne Butler Yeats, born in 1919.

- **Why did Helen find life dull?**

Ans:

Her proud beauty made her married life with Menelaus dull.

- **How was Aphrodite born?**

Ans:

She was born from sea foam according to Greek mythology.

- **Why does Yeats wish his daughter to have no hatred?**

Ans:

He believes a heart free from hatred remains happy and peaceful.

- **Why does Yeats call Maud Gonne opinionated?**

Ans:

Because she acted stubbornly and rejected his love for irrational reasons.

- **What kind of husband does Yeats wish for his daughter?**

Ans:

He wishes her an aristocratic husband who values tradition and courtesy.

- **What were Yeats's views on life-pattern?**

Ans:

He admired grace, manners, and tradition, not the roughness of common life.

- **What is the theme of "The Tower"?**

Ans:

The poem expresses Yeats's struggle against weakness and old age.

- **What is "Ben Bulbin" and how is Yeats linked to it?**

Ans:

It is a mountain near Sligo where Yeats spent his childhood.

- **Who is Plato?**

Ans:

Plato was a Greek philosopher who believed real things are only copies of ideal forms.

- **Who is Plotinus?**

Ans:

Plotinus, a follower of Plato, believed in mystical escape from the material world.

- **Who is Hanrahan?**

Ans:

Hanrahan is Yeats's fictional poet, modeled on the Irish bard Eoghan Ruadh O'Sullivan.

- **What is the theme of "Leda and the Swan"?**

Ans:

It describes the divine act that led to the birth of Greek civilization.

- **What does "Agamemnon dead" mean?**

Ans:

It refers to King Agamemnon, killed by his wife Clytemnestra after the Trojan War.

- **What does "Brute blood of the air" refer to?**

Ans:

It refers to Zeus in the form of a swan who forced Leda.

- **What is "Plato's parable"?**

Ans:

It means man and woman were once one being, later divided but spiritually united.

- **What is "Paddler's heritage"?**

Ans:

It means the nature of ordinary, common women.

- **What is "Honey of generation"?**

Ans:

It means the joy and sweetness of birth and creation.

- **When does life become fruitful?**

Ans:

When both body and mind work in harmony and not against each other.

- **What does the soul call upon the poet's self?**

Ans:

It urges him to climb higher toward wisdom and eternal truth.

- **What is "Sato's ancient blade"?**

Ans:

It is a 550-year-old Japanese sword given to Yeats by Zunzo Sato.

- **What does "Sato's sword" symbolize?**

Ans:

It symbolizes the union of love and war in life.

- **Why does the poet accept reality?**

Ans:

He accepts life with all its joys and sorrows, rejecting escape or denial.

- **What is Byzantium?**

Ans:

Byzantium is the old name for Constantinople, a symbol of perfect art and wisdom.

- **What does "Byzantium" refer to in the poem?**

Ans:

It refers to a spiritual world beyond time, symbolizing paradise.

- **What is "Hades' bobbin"?**

Ans

: It means the soul freed from the human body after death.

- **Where does the poet see the "golden bird"?**

Ans:

He sees it in his vision, perched on a golden bough in Byzantium.

- **What is the theme of “The Gyres”?**

Ans:

It shows the cyclical rise and fall of human civilizations.

- **What is the theme of “Lapis Lazuli”?**

Ans:

It shows that art and wisdom give joy even in times of tragedy.

- **What is “Lapis Lazuli”?**

Ans:

It is a blue semi-precious stone used in art and decoration.

- **What was the opinion against fine arts?**

Ans:

People thought art was useless during war and crisis.

- **Why is art useful, according to Yeats?**

Ans:

Art helps people stay calm and strong during suffering.

- **What is Yeats’s view on the rise and fall of civilization?**

Ans

: He believes that destruction and rebirth are the eternal laws of nature.

- **Who was Callimachus?**

Ans:

He was a Greek sculptor skilled in shaping marble.

- **What is the message of all arts?**

Ans:

Time destroys everything, yet life and art keep returning in cycles.

- **What is the theme of “The Municipal Gallery Revisited”?**

Ans:

It describes Yeats's emotional visit to the Dublin Municipal Gallery in 1937.

- **What is the theme of "The Circus Animals' Desertion"?**

Ans

: It explores the poet's search for the source of imagination.

- **What is "The Countess Cathleen"?**

Ans:

It is a play by Yeats where the heroine Cathleen represents Maud Gonne.

- **What does Yeats mean by "masterful images"?**

Ans:

They are purified images born from the poet's deep emotions.

- **When did Yeats receive the Nobel Prize?**

Ans:

He received the Nobel Prize in 1923.

- **Whom does Yeats address in "When You Are Old"?**

Ans:

He addresses his beloved, Maud Gonne.

- **What is Yeats's nationality?**

Ans:

He is an Irish poet.

- **What does Yeats see in "excited reverie"?**

Ans:

He foresees future years of bloodshed and social chaos.

- **What is the meaning of "Gyres"?**

Ans:

“Gyres” are spiral cycles that symbolize the turns of history.

- **What does “Hurled the little street upon the great” mean?**

Ans:

It means Maud Gonne incited the poor to revolt against rulers.

- **Why is the poet’s mind gloomy in “A Prayer for My Daughter”?**

Ans:

He feels anxious seeing the storm outside and the coming troubles of the world.

- **Whom does the poet address on landing at Byzantium?**

Ans:

He addresses the golden smithies of the Emperor.

- **What does the falcon symbolize in “The Second Coming”?**

Ans:

It symbolizes the human intellect that has lost control.

- **What does the “golden bird” symbolize?**

Ans:

It symbolizes the liberated and immortal soul.

- **What is “intellectual hatred”?**

Ans:

It is the hatred of a learned mind that destroys peace and happiness.

- **What is “Spirit of the World”?**

Ans:

It means Spiritus Mundi, the world spirit that inspires poets.

- **What kind of husband does Yeats wish for his daughter?**

Ans:

He wishes her a noble husband who values old traditions and customs.

- **What is “Horn of Plenty”?**

Ans:

It means abundance and prosperity, symbolized by an overflowing horn.

- **Why is Maud Gonne compared with Helen?**

Ans:

Because her beauty and proud nature resemble the Greek Helen.

- **How did Yeats receive “Lapis Lazuli”?**

Ans:

He received it as a carved medallion from Harry Clifton on his seventieth birthday.

- **What does “Ledaean body” mean?**

Ans: I

t refers to the beautiful body of Maud Gonne, like Leda's or Helen's.