

Identify the Words and Phrases Which Convey the Sense of Time

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Identify the words and phrases in the poem which convey the sense of time, and its working in human life.

William Butler Yeats' (1865-1939) poem "When You Are Old" (1893) reflects on the passage of time and how it shapes human life. The poet explores how time changes a person's appearance and emotions as they grow older. This sense of time is captured beautifully through words and images.

In the very first line, the phrase **"When you are old and grey and full of sleep"** sets the stage for the passage of time. It suggests old age, tiredness, and the slowing down of life. The words "old," "grey," and **"full of sleep"** show how time changes the body and mind.

The line **"And nodding by the fire"** hints at the passage of time as the person grows older and becomes more relaxed, perhaps reminiscing about the past. The phrase **"take down this book"** suggests that the past can still be revisited, but it is a different experience now that time has passed.