

What is the mood of the poem "When You Are Old"?

Generated: Jan 26, 2026

What is the mood of the poem "When You Are Old"? Which images contribute to the creation of this particular mood?

The poem "When You Are Old" (1893), by William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) is full of deep feelings. The mood is a mix of nostalgia and melancholy. It makes the reader feel both sad and romantic. Yeats talks about growing old and remembering the past. He speaks to someone he loved, showing how love changes with time.

The images in the poem help create this mood. First, Yeats describes the speaker as being old and grey. This brings a feeling of age and loss. The image of the person nodding by the fire adds a sense of quiet and peacefulness. The fire represents memories, as it is warm and comforting, but also fading with time.

Then, the poet writes about the eyes, once full of life, now full of sleep. This shows the passage of time. The "soft look" and the deep shadows in the eyes remind us of lost youth and beauty. Yeats speaks of how many people loved the person's beauty, but only one person loved her inner soul. This makes the reader feel that true love is not just about looks, but about a deeper connection.

Finally, Yeats talks about Love fleeing and hiding among the stars. This image makes us think about love being distant and unreachable, just like the stars.

Together, these images show how love and life change as we grow older. The mood is one of reflection, where beauty fades, but true love lasts in the heart.