

A Coat Summary

Writer: William Butler Yeats | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

Summary

The Poet's Creation: Yeats begins the poem by comparing his poetry to a beautiful coat. He says that his "song," meaning his art, was covered with fine "embroideries." These designs came from "old mythologies," the ancient stories and symbols that once inspired him. The coat represents the beauty and imagination of his early work, which was rich with Irish legends and mystical themes. He worked hard and patiently, decorating his poetry with these elements from head to toe, just as one would carefully design an elegant garment.

The Poet's Disappointment: In the next part, Yeats expresses his sadness and anger. He says that "fools" have caught his coat. These people, other poets or public figures, have copied his ideas and style. They "wore it in the world's eyes," pretending that the work was their own. Yeats feels betrayed because he spent years developing this artistic style, only to see it taken and misused by others who lacked originality.

The Poet's Resolution: In the final lines, Yeats decides to let go of his anger. He tells his "song" to leave him and let the imitators have it. He says there is more "enterprise in walking naked," meaning that true creativity comes from honesty and simplicity. He no longer needs his old "coat" of myths and symbols. Instead, he chooses a new, plain, and sincere poetic voice, free from imitation or decoration.