

An Irish Airman Foresees His Death Full Poem

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I know that I shall meet my fate
Somewhere among the clouds above;
Those that I fight I do not hate,
Those that I guard I do not love;
My country is Kiltartan Cross,
My countrymen Kiltartan's poor,
No likely end could bring them loss
Or leave them happier than before.
Nor law, nor duty bade me fight,
Nor public men, nor cheering crowds,
A lonely impulse of delight
Drove to this tumult in the clouds;
I balanced all, brought all to mind,
The years to come seemed waste of breath,
A waste of breath the years behind
In balance with this life, this death.

William Butler Yeats, "An Irish Airman foresees his Death" from *The Wild Swans at Coole*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1919. Public Domain.

Source: *The Wild Swans at Coole* (The Macmillan Company, 1919)