

September 1913 Theme

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

Themes

- **Idealism vs. Materialism:** The central theme of the poem is the conflict between idealism and materialism. In this poem, Yeats strongly criticizes the people of modern Ireland, who are only concerned with money, business, and personal gain. They no longer understand the greatness or sacrifice of the old heroes. The poet sadly says, "Romantic Ireland's dead and gone, / It's with O'Leary in the grave." This line shows that the glory, courage, and idealism of the past have all died. Once, Ireland was proud of its heroism and self-sacrifice, but now it is drowned in greed and narrow selfishness. Yeats mourns the moral decay and spiritual death of his nation.
- **Nationalism and Heroic Sacrifice:** In this poem, Yeats remembers the great Irish revolutionaries such as Edward Fitzgerald, Robert Emmet, and Wolfe Tone, who gave their lives for Ireland's freedom. They were brave and selfless men who fought with the "delirium of the brave," meaning the passionate madness of true heroes. But the modern generation has lost that spirit. The poet bitterly asks, "For this Edward Fitzgerald died, / And Robert Emmet and Wolfe Tone?" This question carries Yeats's deep pain and protest — the nation for which those heroes sacrificed their lives has now become selfish and morally corrupt. Yeats wants to show that true patriotism means sacrifice and noble ideals, which the modern people have completely forgotten.