

The Circus Animals' Desertion Summary

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

This poem is composed in search of poetic thought in nature. He compared the characters in his poems to circus animals. "The Circus Animals' Desertion" is a poem on the interrelationship of life and art. In it, the seventies-aged poet looks back at work written in his twenties and early middle age, to examine how much of his real life has passed. In "The Circus Animals' Desertion" he confesses his frustration at finding no more poetic inspiration. Lamenting only to look back at what he could have done now, he recalls and comments on his past successful deeds. The poem ends with the old poet's self-deprecating remark that he must be content with old rubbish.