

In Auden's elegy to W.B. Yeats, he describes his death and view of the poet's life in a three-part structure. The first section sets up and describes the actual day of his death, telling the details of the land, how Auden saw his last few hours alive, and what the rest of the world would think and do on his last day alive. A description of frozen brooks, "snow [that] disfigured the public statues," (3) and cold temperatures shown in the mercury filled thermometers help the season of winter become established in the very beginning. The third stanza goes on to tell Auden's vision of how Yeats felt on his death bed, having nurses all around him, the "squares," or parts of his mind, empty from the time he spent writing down his thoughts, and "the current of his feeling fail[ing]; he became his admirers" (16) showing that he finally found a place next to those he admired who had also passed.

The second part of his poem is where Auden describes his thoughts on Yeats. The word "silly" is used, but is not meant in the funny context it is usually spoken or written with. Silly also means weak and helpless, and in this context, he goes on further to say he is weak and helpless due to Ireland and what it makes people witness. "The parish of rich women, physical decay, / Yourself. Mad Ireland hurt you into poetry" (32-33) describes the women and the decaying of him pushes him into writing about his feelings. Auden says that even through all of the madness and hurt his land brought into Yeats's life, his poems still lived on and so did Ireland. Nothing about his poems could make Ireland change, but the writing flowed through and lives in the valleys, keeps going "south from ranches of isolation and the busy griefs" and "raw towns" (35-39). He further goes on to say "Earth, receive your honoured guest," (41) which fully signifies his high opinion of this poet. Though all of the suffering and pain a country can push onto a person, he still managed to write amazing poetry that will live on, no matter what Ireland has to offer.

The last section of the poem talks about how Auden sees society and the world at that time. He views them as ungrateful, non-intellectual parts of society, all wrapped up in the problems that are leading to World War II going on during 1940. "And the living nations wait, / Each sequestered in its hate" (47-48) show the obvious isolation of each country during this time due to the hatred brewing, and how instead of focusing on that, others should recognize to rejoice and praise, as stated in the third to last and last stanzas. I particularly liked the image of "the deserts of the heart," meaning they were dry of feeling and love, and that the "healing fountain" (61-62) could bring them back to life.

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