

## The Lake Isle of Innisfree

### The Lake Isle of Innisfree William Butler Yeats (1865 - 1939)



I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,  
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:  
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,  
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,  
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;  
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,  
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day  
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;  
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,  
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

- WB Yeats was born in 1865 in Dublin. His family was upper class.
- Yeats received classes in art and thus could paint a scene well with words.
- Despite dyslexia and early difficulty with learning the alphabet, he turned into the greatest Irish Poet of the Twentieth Century.
- He spent some of his early life in London. That's where he wrote The Lake Isle of Innisfree at the age of 25. The Isle was a place he daydreamed about.
- He loved Sligo, his mother's home place and the location for The Lake Isle of Innisfree.
- The Lake Isle of Innisfree is a poem which shows that Yeats was a bit of dreamer, like a lot of poets. He liked to dream of a beautiful place like Innisfree.
- The poem also shows how simple use of language could achieve musical effects.

1. Give a summary of the poem.
2. Discuss the themes related to the poem.
3. What can you say about the tone(s) of the poem?
4. Explain imagery and sound effects used in the poem.

## Summary

### Stanza 1

The poet says he loves Innisfree and enjoys pastoral ..... . He likes living alone, his ..... for the rural life can be seen in his desire to build a small cabin made of clay and wattle. He will use wood to build his cabin and plant beans, keep a hive for bees and live alone. He likes to listen to the ..... sound of bees and live in a grassy open space in a forest or glade.

### Stanza 2

He finds that peace comes slowly and he enjoys the atmosphere which is free from pollution. The poet ..... to the mist (veils of the morning) and stars (glimmer) and possibly the wild blue and purple flowers in the meadows (purple glow). He also talks about the linnet, a small brown singing bird.

### Stanza 3

The poet ..... himself to return to Innisfree because he misses it. He hears the quiet sounds of the lake. He is ..... as he stands on the pavement near the road. The 'heart's core' refers to the depth of the heart.

**Fill the blanks in the text above with the appropriate form of:** reference, buzz, like, nostalgia, reassure, live.

## Rhymed Quatrains in Vaguely Iambic Hexameter and Tetrameter

Yeats is no stranger to poetic forms. While the subject matter of his poems can get pretty weird, he likes to play up the traditional forms.

This poem isn't as strict as some of his other poems, but it does have a formal rhyme scheme (the pattern of the rhymes), and it's composed of three stanzas (a block of lines that look like paragraph breaks) of four lines each, called quatrains. Take a look:

Stanza 1: ABAB

Stanza 2: CDCD

Stanza 3: EFEF

For example, in the first stanza, the end words (words at the end of the line) rhyme accordingly: Innisfree (A) rhymes with the end word in the third line, honey-bee (A); and made (B) rhymes with the fourth line's end word, glade(B). The pattern repeats itself perfectly throughout the rest of the poem. Tidy work by Yeats.

But wait. There's even more to it. If you read the poem carefully, you'll see that each line has about six stresses in it:

I **will** rise and **go** now and **go** to **Innisfree**.

Except for the last line of each stanza, which usually has four:

And **live alone** in the **bee**-loud **glade**.

Those six-stress lines are a little something we like to call hexameter. Wouldn't you know, that's the Latin term for a six-stress meter. Fancy. And those four-stress lines? Those are written in tetrameter.

## Vaguely Iambic

In both cases, the lines usually have a sing-songy daDUM daDUM beat to them, but there are a ton of variations and exceptions throughout this poem. Usually, we would call a meter like this iambic, which is the term we use for meters that follow a pattern of unstressed, followed by stressed syllables. But in this case, there are an awful lot of exceptions to the rule. So we'll just call this one vaguely iambic.

Source: <http://www.shmoop.com/literature/>