

To the Rose upon the Rood of Time (1893)
William Butler Yeats

Irish nationalist

Red Rose, proud Rose, sad Rose of all my days!
Come near me, while I sing the ancient ways

Cuchulain battling with the bitter tide;
The Druid, grey, wood-nurtured, quiet-eyed, demigod
Who cast round Fergus dreams, and ruin untold;
And thine own sadness, whereof stars, grown old
In dancing silver-sandalled on the sea,
Sing in their high and lonely melody.
Come near, that no more blinded by man's fate,
I find under the boughs of love and hate,
In all poor foolish things that live a day,
Eternal beauty wandering on her way.

Come near, come near, come near—Ah, leave me still
A little space for the rose-breath to fill!

Lest I no more hear common things that crave;
The weak worm hiding down in its small cave,
The field-mouse running by me in the grass,
And heavy mortal hopes that toil and pass;
But seek alone to hear the strange things said
By God to the bright hearts of those long dead,
And learn to chaunt a tongue men do not know.
Come near; I would, before my time to go,
Sing of old Eire and the ancient ways

Red Rose, proud Rose, sad Rose of all my days.

greatest hero of Irish myth fought against the ocean

personif.

a crucifix

all his life

* addresses the Rose - symb. of nationalist vision = "black rose" of Ireland; or Maude Gonne his love who was a female revolutionist "dark beauty"

* "seek alone" = isolated in search

paradox

goddess

room to take it in; overwhelmed

* not too close - leave room so I focus on not only abstract beauty - miracles of God wants to address lowly subj: "worm" + "mouse"

enjambment

* desire to poeticize all of Ireland from mice to relig. truths

* myths - still important to him

Gaelic, old Irish

dedicated to Rose all says = life-long

old word for Ireland

die = sing of Ireland before he departs