

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)

14 *The Rose Tree*

‘O words are lightly spoken,’
Said Pearse to Connolly,
‘Maybe a breath of politic words
Has withered our Rose Tree;
Or maybe but a wind that blows 5
Across the bitter sea.’

‘It needs to be but watered,’
James Connolly replied,
‘To make the green come out again
And spread on every side, 10
And shake the blossom from the bud
To be the garden’s pride.’

‘But where can we draw water,’
Said Pearse to Connolly,
‘When all the wells are parched away? 15
O plain as plain can be
There’s nothing but our own red blood
Can make a right Rose Tree.’

1921

(From *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats*. 2nd. ed.
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