

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)

1 *Beggar to Beggar Cried*

‘Time to put off the world and go somewhere  
And find my health again in the sea air,’  
*Beggar to beggar cried, being frenzy-struck,*  
‘And make my soul before my pate is bare.’

‘And get a comfortable wife and house 5  
To rid me of the devil in my shoes,’  
*Beggar to beggar cried, being frenzy-struck,*  
‘And the worse devil that is between my thighs.’

‘And though I’d marry with a comely lass,  
She need not be too comely — let it pass,’ 10  
*Beggar to beggar cried, being frenzy-struck,*  
‘But there’s a devil in a looking-glass.’

‘Nor should she be too rich, because the rich  
Are driven by wealth as beggars by the itch,’  
*Beggar to beggar cried, being frenzy-struck,* 15  
‘And cannot have a humorous happy speech.’

‘And there I’ll grow respected at my ease,  
And hear amid the garden’s nightly peace,’  
*Beggar to beggar cried, being frenzy-struck,*  
‘The wind-blown clamour of the barnacle-geese.’ 20

1914

(From *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats*. 2nd. ed.  
London: Macmillan, 1950)