

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)

6 *The Blessed*

Cumhal called out, bending his head,  
Till Dathi came and stood,  
With a blink in his eyes, at the cave-mouth,  
Between the wind and the wood.

And Cumhal said, bending his knees, 5  
'I have come by the windy way  
To gather the half of your blessedness  
And learn to pray when you pray.

'I can bring you salmon out of the streams  
And heron out of the skies.' 10  
But Dathi folded his hands and smiled  
With the secrets of God in his eyes.

And Cumhal saw like a drifting smoke  
All manner of blessed souls,  
Women and children, young men with books, 15  
And old men with croziers and stoles.

'Praise God and God's Mother,' Dathi said,  
'For God and God's Mother have sent  
The blessedest souls that walk in the world  
To fill your heart with content.' 20

'And which is the blessedest,' Cumhal said,  
'Where all are comely and good?  
Is it these that with golden thuribles  
Are singing about the wood?'

'My eyes are blinking,' Dathi said, 25  
'With the secrets of God half blind,  
But I can see where the wind goes  
And follow the way of the wind;

‘And blessedness goes where the wind goes,  
And when it is gone we are dead; 30  
I see the blessedest soul in the world  
And he nods a drunken head.

‘O blessedness comes in the night and the day  
And whither the wise heart knows;  
And one has seen in the redness of wine 35  
The Incorruptible Rose,

‘That drowsily drops faint leaves on him  
And the sweetness of desire,  
While time and the world are ebbing away  
In twilights of dew and of fire.’ 40

*1899*

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