

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

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