

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)

4 *The Ballad of the Foxhunter*

'Lay me in a cushioned chair;  
Carry me, ye four,  
With cushions here and cushions there,  
To see the world once more.

'To stable and to kennel go; 5  
Bring what is there to bring;  
Lead my Lollard to and fro,  
Or gently in a ring.

'Put the chair upon the grass:  
Bring Rody and his hounds, 10  
That I may contented pass  
From these earthly bounds.'

His eyelids droop, his head falls low,  
His old eyes cloud with dreams;  
The sun upon all things that grow 15  
Falls in sleepy streams.

Brown Lollard treads upon the lawn,  
And to the armchair goes,  
And now the old man's dreams are gone,  
He smooths the long brown nose. 20

And now moves many a pleasant tongue  
Upon his wasted hands,  
For leading aged hounds and young  
The huntsman near him stands.

'Huntsman Rody, blow the horn, 25  
Make the hills reply.'  
The huntsman loosens on the morn  
A gay wandering cry.

Fire is in the old man's eyes,  
His fingers move and sway, 30  
And when the wandering music dies  
They hear him feebly say,

'Huntsman Rody, blow the horn,  
Make the hills reply.'  
'I cannot blow upon my horn, 35  
I can but weep and sigh.'

Servants round his cushioned place  
Are with new sorrow wrung;  
Hounds are gazing on his face,  
Aged hounds and young. 40

One blind hound only lies apart  
On the sun-smitten grass;  
He holds deep commune with his heart:  
The moments pass and pass;

The blind hound with a mournful din 45  
Lifts slow his wintry head;  
The servants bear the body in;  
The hounds wail for the dead.

*1889*

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