

talk
to
me!

LET'S TALK EMPOWERMENT. LET'S TALK ENGLISH

Beehive

4: The Lake Isle of Innisfree

by

William Butler Yeats

1. Summary

The poet **William Butler Yeats** was born in Dublin, Ireland, and spent his youth there. The island on the Lake of Innisfree is a place near the coast of Ireland, where nobody lives. Yeats used to go to that island during his school holidays, and has vivid memories of its peace and natural beauty. Each part of the day is different, and has its own charm. This poem expresses Yeats' memories of Innisfree, and his yearning to return to the place of peace and tranquility. These memories are in sharp contrast to the dull and noisy life he lives in London. He decides to go back to the country life he experienced as a child.

Click on the link below to hear Sir Anthony Hopkins, a famous British actor, recite the poem

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h09s6LKOmx4>

Here are some pictures of the beautiful Isle of Lake Innisfree





2. Stanza By Stanza Explanation

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honeybee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

The poet has made a decision to go back to Innisfree. He wants to build a small cottage there, with clay and sticks. He will plant beans, have a hive for honey bees and live alone in an open space where he can hear the buzzing of the bees.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evenings full of the linnet's wings.

He feels he will be in the middle of nature, surrounded by nature. The morning starts peacefully, with mist over the lake, which is like a veil hiding its beauty. The peace comes all the way down to the ground where the crickets chirp in the evenings. The night glimmers because of the stars in the sky, and there is a purple glow in the afternoon. In the evenings, the sky is full of the wings of linnets who are flying back to their nests. So each part of the day is different, but beautiful in its own way.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear the lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

He repeats his decision to go back right away to Innisfree. All night and day, whether he is standing on the roads of London, or on its grey pavements, he hears a sound deep within his heart: the soft sounds of the lake water gently touching the shore.

3. Vocabulary

1. **Arise** - to get up; also to result from something
Serious problems can **arise** from careless mistakes.
2. **Cabin** – a cottage
The monk lived alone in a small **cabin** high up in the mountains
3. **Wattles** - twisted sticks for making fences, walls
My grandfather used **wattles** to build a fence to protect his vegetables.
4. **Glade** - clearing; open space
We went for a picnic in a forest and found a beautiful **glade** where we ate our lunch.
5. **Glimmer** - shine, sparkle
The stars **glimmered** in the sky.
6. **Linnet** - a small brown and grey bird with a short beak
People often keep **linnets** in their homes because they sing very beautifully.
7. **Lapping** - soft splashing sound
I sat on the beach for many hours and listened to the **lapping** of the waves.

4. Questions

- I.
 1. **What kind of place is Innisfree? Think about:**
 - (i) **the three things the poet wants to do when he goes back there (stanza I);**
 - (ii) **what he hears and sees there and its effect on him (stanza II);**

(iii) what he hears in his “heart’s core” even when he is far away from Innisfree (stanza III).

2. By now you may have concluded that Innisfree is a simple, natural place, full of beauty and peace. How does the poet contrast it with where he now stands? (Read stanza III.)
3. Do you think Innisfree is only a place, or a state of mind? Does the poet actually miss the place of his boyhood days?

II.

1. Look at the words the poet uses to describe what he sees and hears at Innisfree
 - (i) bee-loud glade
 - (ii) evenings full of the linnet’s wings
 - (iii) lake water lapping with low sounds
 What pictures do these words create in your mind?

2. Look at these words;

....peace comes dropping slow

Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings

What do these words mean to you? What do you think “comes dropping slow...from the veils of the morning”? What does “to where the cricket sings” mean?

5. Literary Devices

1. **Rhyme scheme of the poem:** abab

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,	a
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:	b
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honeybee,	a
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.	b

2. **Alliteration:** The repetition of a consonant sound in two or more consecutive or closely connected words

‘hive’, ‘honey bee’ - ‘h’ sound is repeated;

‘lake’, ‘lapping’, ‘low’ - ‘l’ sound is repeated

3. **Repetition:** ‘I will arise and go now’ is repeated in stanza 1 and 3

4. **Personification:** Morning is personified
5. **Metaphor:** A figure of speech that makes an implied comparison between two things that are unrelated, but which share some common characteristics. In this poem mists are compared to veils.