

W. B. Yeats -  
"AMONG THE  
SCHOOL CHILDREN"

Sub - Eng (H)  
B.A Part III Paper (VIII)

Note:- Continued from the  
previous unfinished  
note.

The ageing Maud Gonne  
is not mere fantasy,  
but a living woman whose  
fading beauty is contrasted  
with the freshness of the  
a childhood;

Her present image  
floats into the mind -  
Did Quotrocento finger  
fashion it

Hollow of cheek as though  
it drank the wind  
And took a mess of  
shadows for its meat.  
Beside the pathos of this  
portrait is set the mocker

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of the old poet in his  
official mark of respectability  
Better to smile or all that  
smile, and show  
There is a comfortable  
kind of old scarecrow.

This record of personal experience  
is a prelude to a series of  
questionings on the mystery  
of life. First there is the  
paradox of the suffering  
of the mother in travail  
for mother to <sup>shape</sup> ~~pop~~ upon  
her lap' which might turn  
lost into the 'comfortable  
kind of old scarecrow',  
that shape with sixty or  
more winters on its head.

Finally the words  
like the mothers we show  
worshipping images, though  
these 'rest at the candle  
and 'keep a marble as a  
bronze record'. These 'precious  
symbols' all look heavenly

glory' and yet they two  
are:

Self born mockery of  
man's enterprise.

The last stanza answers  
all the questioning by  
showing a beauty which  
is perpetual growth and  
movement, the wholeness  
of which defies analysis.

Kakaw is blossoming and  
dancing there,

The body is not crushed  
to pleasure soul,

Nor beauty born out of  
its own despair,

Nor beat-eyed wisdom  
eat midnight oil,

O chestnut tree, great  
rooted blossomer,

Are you the leaf, the  
blossom or the bole?

O body swayed to music,

O brightening glance,

How can we know

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classmate

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the dancer from the dance?  
This is poetry in which the  
outer and inner lives  
are brought together in  
a unity which includes  
realism, wit, lyrical beauty  
and philosophical meditation.

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