

# The Second Coming

William Butler Yeats, 1921

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;  
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.  
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out  
When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*  
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert  
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,  
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,  
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it  
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.  
The darkness drops again; but now I know  
That twenty centuries of stony sleep  
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,  
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,  
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

Yeats had a quasi-mystical view of history and with the chaos of the early 20th century saw the cycle that began with the birth of Christ as coming to a close. (The previous cycle ran from the Babylonians ~2000 BC through the end of Greco-Roman Culture.)

# Amoretti: Sonnet 79

By Edmund Spenser, 1595

Men call you fayre, and you doe credit it, (*fair, do*)  
For that your selfe ye daily such doe see: (*self you*)  
But the trew fayre, that is the gentle wit (*true fair*)  
And vertuous mind, is much more prayd of me. (*virtuous, praised*)  
For all the rest, how ever fayre it be,  
Shall turne to nought and lose that glorious hew; (*nought=nothing, hue*)  
But onely that is permanent, and free  
From frayle corruption that doth flesh ensew. (*frail, ensew=follow*)  
That is true beautie: that doth argue you  
To be divine, and born of heavenly seed,  
Deriv'd from that fayre Spirit from whom all true  
And perfect beauty did at first proceed.  
He only fayre, and what he fayre hath made;  
All other fayre, lyke flowres, untymely fade. (*like flowers, untimely*)

A sonnet is 14 lines of rhymed iambic pentameter (Lines made up of 5 pairs of 2 syllables with the emphasis on the 2nd syllable per pair - some variation is normal). The theme of a sonnet cycle is typically unrequited love; Spenser, though makes the beauty not just external, but also internal.

# The Tyger

William Blake, 1794

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,  
In the forests of the night;  
What immortal hand or eye,  
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies.  
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?  
On what wings dare he aspire?  
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,  
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?  
And when thy heart began to beat,  
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,  
In what furnace was thy brain?  
What the anvil? what dread grasp,  
Dare its deadly terrors clasp!

When the stars threw down their spears  
And water'd heaven with their tears:  
Did he smile his work to see?  
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger Tyger burning bright,  
In the forests of the night:  
What immortal hand or eye,  
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

Part of a sequence of poems showing the perspective of life from innocence and experience. "The Lamb" is the contrasting poem of innocence.

# God's Grandeur

Gerard Manley Hopkins, 1877 (published 1918)

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.  
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;  
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil  
Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod? (reck=consider)  
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;  
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;  
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil  
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;  
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;  
And though the last lights off the black West went  
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —  
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent  
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

## Questions to Discuss

Take 20 minutes to look at/read what you have been given and discuss it.

Remember our discussion of beauty, truth, and goodness:

**Beauty** - does the art attain artistic balance and creativity; does it lift the emotions; is it representative of what art should be

**Truth** - does it accurately represent eternal Truth and/or truth about the world (the world as it is/the world as it might be)

**Goodness** - does it engender a Biblical moral response, does it cause us to love God and his creation more

The questions below can be used to help discussion.

- What can you observe about the craft of this work? In what ways does it strike you as Beautiful/not beautiful?
- In what ways does this work speak of God's Truth? Or does it contradict Truth?
- Is this work Good? Does it reinforce Biblical standards of morality?
- How do beauty, truth, and goodness interact here?
- How "good" is this work in a generic sense?
- In what ways is this work beneficial (or not) for Christians?
- Is it to your taste? (*i.e.* Do you like/dislike it?)