

THE SONG OF WANDERING AENGUS *by: W.B. Yeats*

1899 collection "The Wind Among the Reeds" - Romantic, mysterious

This poem accounts personal themes from the poet's life: symbolic Irish and Greek mythology

Song suggests something lyrical/folk song

This is a romantic poem in which there is a search/looking for something

Aengus is a god of Irish mythology- a god of youth and beauty (forever young)

He lived in the most marvellous place where no one ever died, food and drink plentiful

Tale Aengus: love for Caer, sick with love for her when saw her in a dream, searches for her and finds her. Caer spent each alternate year as swan or girl. When Aengus found she is swan so he becomes a swan (sing beautiful song), then after year turn back to human.

Stanza 1: the hero's quest is typically mythological/ elusive dream, but he has faith and gives him purpose for life

Rural setting

I WENT out to the hazel wood, - *I is the persona/narrator*

Wood- away from constraints of society, place of discovery, depths of imagination

Because a fire was in my head, -*fire shows passion/obsession of love, wondering of life's journey*

And cut and peeled a hazel wand, -*vehicle of magic quest*

White, surreal, magical

And hooked a berry to a thread; -*thread is soft*

His quest is intangible

Nature is indissoluble of his quest

And when white moths were on the wing, -*soft sounds Ethereal (out of wakes of self subconscious mind)*

And moth-like stars were flickering out, -*sound/rhythm tangible*

I dropped the berry in a stream

And caught a little silver trout. *Trout instead of swan*

When I had laid it on the floor

I went to blow the fire a-flame, - *alight original fire of imagination*

But something rustled on the floor, -*onomatopoeia*

And someone called me by my name: - *"something" "someone" mysterious*

Name suggests individual relationship

It had become a glimmering girl –animal metamorphosis, brightly glimpsed maiden

It- refers to fish

Glimmering girl is an aspect of his psyche/fantasy of healthy, fresh, beauty (something he cannot realise but desires) could be moment of completeness

Trout girl recalls Irish myth of maighdean mhara (maidens of sea) who bewitched men to fall in love with them

With apple blossom in her hair –romantic image of flowers in her hair

Who called me by my name and ran

And faded through the brightening air. “ing” suggest continuity

He could not catch her-sad

Life is incomplete

Stanza 3: shift

Though I am old with wandering –quest, severely difficult, time is passing not like Aengus

Through hollow lands and hilly lands,

I will find out where she has gone, -definite/hopeful desire

And kiss her lips and take her hands; -tangible

And walk among long dappled grass, “dappled” light } not fit into normal life

And pluck till time and times are done sensual image- biblical “pluck” pick fruit

Showing end of his life

The silver apples of the moon, “moon” lunar source of all thoughts that are of the community, of instinct, primal consciousness

Could be reference to the palace of God Aengus

The golden apples of the sun. “sun” new thoughts, intellectual, disciplined and rational self

Final end of Aengus’s quest is the eating of both apples meaning perfect harmony of two aspects of being: lunar self (more instinctual, belonging unconsciousness) and solar self (intellectual, rational)

“Glimmering girl” not individual at all but aspect Yeats’s psyche-the primitive, carefree aspect, not able fully access, being too disciplined and intelligent

What the hero seeks is elusive, no logical reason to believe he will find it, continue have faith and faith gives life meaning

Last two lines: immortal and loved

Perfect harmony

Does not unite with loved one, he has grown old unlike Aengus

Alludes to his complete relationships with women