



# The Second Coming

BY WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

SHARE

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?

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Source: The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats (1989)

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