

“The Second Coming” by William Butler Yeats

By: Warren Rivera



“The Second Coming”

*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?*



Epigraph

- An apposite quotation at the beginning of a book, chapter, etc.

Epigraph vs. Epithet vs. Epitaph

Epithet

- Any word or phrase applied to a person or thing to describe an actual or attributed quality

Epitaph

- A brief poem or other writing in praise of a deceased person

Biography of William Butler Yeats



Allusion

- A passing or casual reference; an incidental mention of something, either directly or by implication

What allusions are in the Poem?

- “A shape with lion body and the head of a man...” refers to the Sphinx in Egypt
- “Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?” The Sphinx faces east, towards the general area of Bethlehem

How does the poem apply to TFA?

Work Cited

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