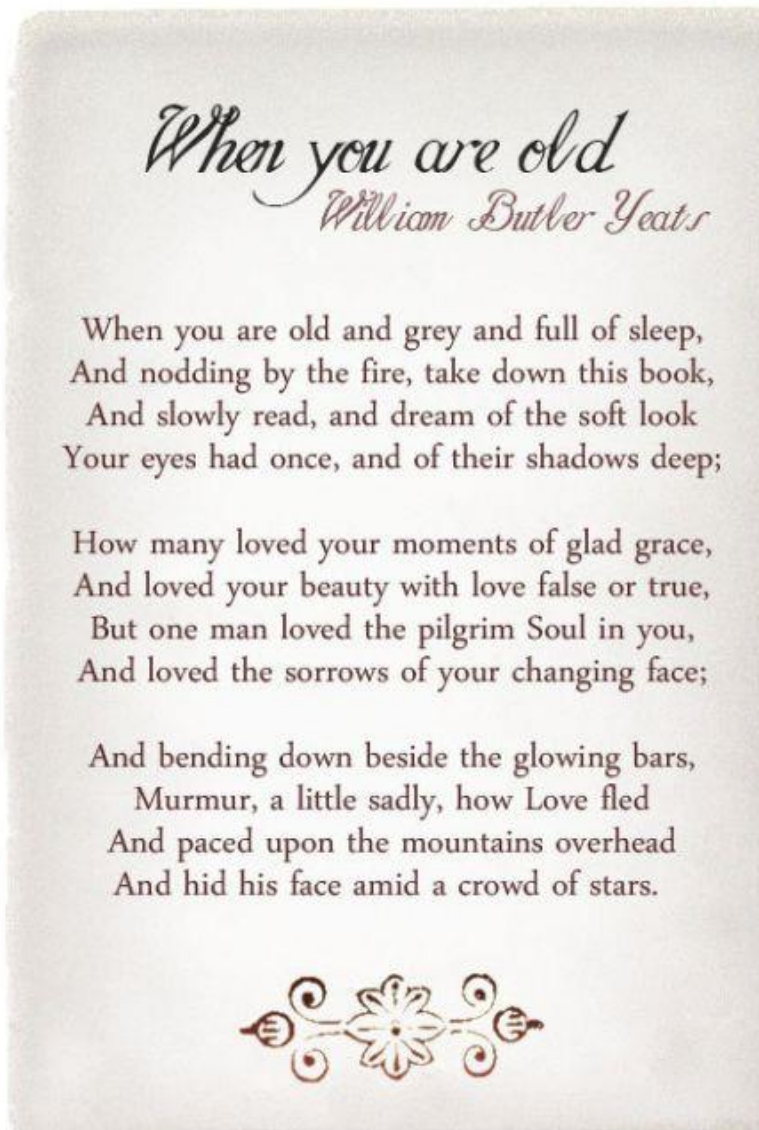




INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR

	Department: ENGLISH	May 2021
Study Notes	Topic: When you are old (poem)	Class: VIII

When you are old- A Poem by W.B. Yeats



The depiction of this poem in your main course book is in the form of a comic adaptation –where the visuals enhance the overall impact, the emotion being conveyed and also the unique features of the characters!

Short Summary of the Poem:

- **“When You Are Old”** is a poem about love and where the speaker directly addresses his beloved and invites her to throw her mind forward to the future when she will not be attractive, beautiful or glamorous, but a fair old lady poking by the fire.
- He asks her to recall her past youth, how many people would have loved and admired her for her startling looks and eye-catching features. However, he mentions that there was only one person who loved her sincerely despite knowing the transient qualities of her beauty.
- He adds that he could have been the right choice for her, but she rejected him. As their love would not last, and she would surely regret her decision for the rest of her life. What enchants the reader is the way he has drawn a metaphorical comparison to show his genuine love for his mistress.

A Critical Appreciation of the Poem

There isn't a single reason why people enjoy reading poetry. It could be because they enjoy the rhythm that the poet establishes with the words. It could be that they enjoy the rhyme. It could be because they enjoy the vivid imagery or the creation of effects through figures of speech. It depends on the poem, and it depends on the reader.

Theme and Meaning of the stanzas in the Poem

Major Themes in “When You Are Old” are Love, Rejection and Time.

- To express pure love, the poet invites her to have a glance at the time when she will be old and will not be surrounded by fake lovers. Therefore, she should understand his feelings toward her.
- Throughout the poem, he tries to make her realize that her existing company loves her for her beauty, but one day she would grow old and regret lost opportunities.

Lines and Stanzas

- Most poems are written in lines.
- A group of lines in a poem is called a stanza.
- Stanzas separate ideas in a poem. They act like paragraphs.
- This poem has two stanzas.

March
A blue day
A blue jay
And a good beginning.
One crow,
Melting snow -
Spring's winning!

By
Eleanor Farjeon 21

The speaker addresses someone and asks this person to **imagine old age**, a time of grey hair and general tiredness. The speaker tells the addressee to pick up this book when they're falling asleep by the fire, and to read from it, while dreaming of the soft and shadowed look the addressee's own eyes used to have.

The addressee should also **think of how many people loved** the addressee's gracefulness and beauty, **whether or not these people were sincere in their love**. But there was **one man who genuinely loved** the addressee's emotional and spiritual restlessness. This man also loved the sadness that showed on the addressee's face as it changed over the years.

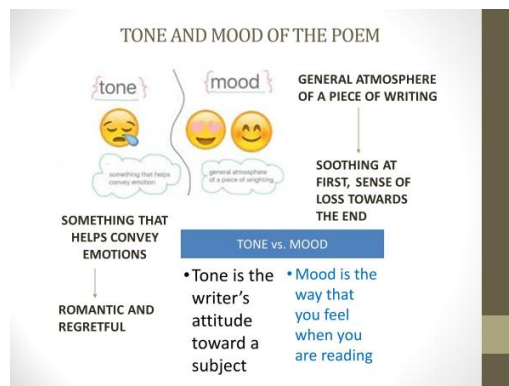
The **speaker imagines the addressee bending down to tend to a fire and muttering sadly** about how love ran away to walk restlessly in the mountains and hid among the stars of the night.

Imagery:

In this poem **Imagery** is used to make readers perceive things with their five senses.

He has used imagery in the poem such as:

- **‘full of sleep’** which conveys a sense of tiredness.
- **‘nodding by the fire’** represents someone sitting on a rocking chair and thinking
- **‘slowly read’** conveys that the person reading the poem should pause and think /reflect on the lines written in the poem
- **‘dream’** conveys a sense of reverie (memories and images that come to ones mind while thinking about the past)



Rhyme Scheme:

- "When You are Old" by [William Butler Yeats](#) is an exquisite poem, in part because of its meaning, but also because of the sound created by its perfect rhyme scheme.
- The scheme is ABBA, CDDC, EFFE. I think this pattern plays a significant role in echoing how he the speaker loved a woman since she was young and beautiful, and loved her still as she grew old:

"How many loved your moments of glad grace,
And loved your beauty with love false and true;
but one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face."

Figures of Speech:

Imagery: Imagery is used to make readers perceive things with their five senses. He has used imagery in the poem such as, "And nodding by the fire, take down this book", "And bending down beside the glowing bars" and "And paced upon the mountains overhead".

Symbolism: Symbolism is using symbols to signify ideas and qualities, giving them symbolic meanings different from literal meanings. Here, "grey and weak and full of sleep" symbolizes an elderly woman. "Fire" is the symbol of fiery love she once rejected and "mountain overhead" and "crowd of stars" stand for things she knows exists but she can't reach them.

Consonance: Consonance is the repetition of consonant sounds in the same line such as the sound of /n/ in "And bending down beside the glowing bars" and "And paced upon the mountains overhead".

Alliteration: Alliteration is a repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of the letters in the same line. For example, the sound of /h/ in "And hid his face amid a crowd of stars".

Personification: Personification is to give human characteristics to inanimate objects. For example, "Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled", as if the love is human and it can move.

Enjambment: It is defined as a thought in a verse that does not come to an end at a line break; instead, it rolls over to the next line. Such as,
"And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars."