

With a casual appreciation of the poem "Among School Children" (1928) by Seamus Heaney. The poem is a realistic-symbolic, metaphysical poem with a profound meaning. Heaney is a late romantic and a post-romantic with an additional added stage of contact with Irish mythological traditions and Celtic culture. What is remarkable about his whole career is his sustained power of development. He could not remain a part of the Celtic Twilight. The present poem belongs to the volume entitled "The Slaves" which was written at the time when the poet was a member of the Irish Senate and a successful figure. At the age of 30, he enjoyed a secretary-inspired visit to Waterford Convent School. He was conducted through all the classes of the school by a kind old man. The children are at work and wondered at the sixty-year-old smiling public man. But he is reminded of Maude Gonne's childhood and her school days.

The poem cannot be called 'a curse upon old age' as Yeats himself has said once. It does not curse old age but it gives a response and a contrasting picture of youth and age, the ideal and the actual, man's nobility and absurdity. So the poem presents a fact that everything demands its opposite. Youth is <sup>now</sup> known but loved only in Maude Gonne has classic-hera-like features. The past is connected with the present and the personal with the impersonal in the imagination of the poet. The poet is reminded how Maude Gonne had told him once about the ~~is~~ holding of the teacher to her and the starting of tragic songs throughout the day. He could listen to her a narration & all their two souls become one, like the yolk and white of an egg. He says:

"I dream of a heraeon body, bent  
Above a sinking fire a tale that she  
Told of harsh reproof, or trivial event"

The colour of the cheeks and hair of one of the girls remind him of the complexion of his beloved, his imagination is thus wild, and she sees her as if she were actually standing before him. He is also reminded of Maude's look in her old age. She had hollow cheeks, was old and

in spirit and looked with an astonish only found and had  
only remains for her food yet she was a little subject to  
a round work of art

It is no use worshiping for lose young and  
beauty the age and death are dark realities they must be  
accepted by us decay and decline is the nature of love with  
poet is the opinion that if women were the deaf and  
old age of their son they would have no children at all but  
the 'daisy' of generation is the drug that destroys in the re-  
by some the soul the recollection of its pre-natal Recreation and  
the newly born soul receives its new and forgets its earlier  
Recreation. The same case is with memory because like has to  
continue.

The poet has mocked at the greatest philosophers  
of the world in a light tone. Plato, the great greek philosopher,  
regarded the world as unreal, Descartes, the father of  
Alexander the Great, was more practical and realistic philosophy  
young Caroline great philosopher, was a great romantic  
listening to the sound of the plow with all his heart they  
become old and could not beat time. They are not  
not needed for their continuation of life. yet all worship  
images and worship images. Mothers love their children  
and we love our loved. These ideals meet at all  
human efforts to obtain them. They are the necessities of  
the heart as philosophies are the necessities of the mind  
yet young and beauty from die

The last stanza of the poem is the forceful statement  
of the old superstition of the doctrine that life is a unity.  
An organism made up of opposites. Just as the chestnut  
tree is neither leaf, blossom or hole, but the excessive unity of all  
three. So also man is neither mind nor body nor soul, but a  
an organic unity of the three. Life and labour can  
be successful only when the body is not separated from  
the soul as the dancer can never be separated from the  
dance. Thus the poem ends on a note of mystical acceptance  
of the world as it is.

Labour is blossoming or dancing where  
The body is not hindered to pleasure soul,  
A chestnut tree, great rooted blossomed,  
Are you a leaf, the blossom or the hole?  
How can we know the dancer from the dance?