

The Second Coming

The Second Coming (1919) is one of the most famous poems of W. B. Yeats. It describes a nightmarish vision the poet has of a grotesque beast which would potentially destroy the world. The poem is the alternative belief to the christian belief of Second Coming. It prophesises the return of Jesus to earth who will establish the kingdom of heaven, reward thee faithful and punish the enemies. On the contrary, Yeats's The Second Coming is apocalyptic in nature.

In the first stanza, the poets describes the world full of chaos, confusion and pain. The poet says that the spiral is widening and its losing its grip as people couldnot hear the right voice of the God/Jesus. The world is mired with violence and bloodshed. All sense of orderliness is gone as 'mere anarchy is loosed upon the world'. The best people are scared while the evil ones are full of 'passionate energy'.

Having witnessed this extremely violent scenraio, the poet expereinces a vision which troubles his sight. The poet witnesses the arrival of a grotesque beast in the desert. It has shape of a lion's body and head of a man. His gaze is 'pitiless as the sun'. The poet wonders what beast whose time has finally come is slouching towards Bethlahm to be born?

The poem is full of terrifying language and violent imagery. Surreal images fly at the reader thick and fast, creating an unsettling atmosphere that suggest a world on the brink of destruction. The poem is written in the aftermath of First World War.

A genuine helplessness pervades throughout the poem as violence looms large on the mankind. Whether the future is pure chaos, or whether it will offer some redemption , remains undecided.