

# "The Second Coming"

By William Butler Yeats

*Transcription, correction, editorial commentary, and  
markup by Students and Staff of the University of Virginia*

MICHAEL ROBARTES AND THE  
DANCER, BY WILLIAM BUTLER  
YEATS.

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## THE SECOND COMING.

1 Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
1 The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
2 Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
3 Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
4 The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
5 The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
6 The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
7 Are full of passionate intensity.  
  
8 Surely some revelation is at hand;  
9 Surely the Second Coming is at hand.  
10 The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out  
11 When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi  
12 Troubles my sight: a waste of desert sand  
13 A shape with lion body and the head of a man,  
14 A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,  
15 Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it  
16 Wind shadows the indignant desert birds.

17 The darkness drops again but now I know  
18 That twenty centuries of stony sleep  
19 Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,  
20 And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,  
21 Slouches toward Bethlehem to be born?