

- a) I believe that The Lake Isle of Innisfree is brought to life very vividly in W.B. Yeats' poem of the same name. Yeats describes an idyllic, peaceful little island in the west of Ireland: a place where he longs to escape to when he is standing on 'the pavements grey' in London.

The island Yeats describes is a place of great natural beauty and his greatest wish is to live a self-sufficient life in this haven. He will grow his own food there, take honey from his hives, and 'live alone in the bee-loud glade'.

No matter what the time of day or night, the island is a serene and lovely place. The mists of morning hang like a veil over the island, and the fall of the dew gives the impression that 'peace comes dropping slow' there. Midday brings sunshine, and the purple heather is a blaze of colour, evening is full of the whirr of linnet's wings, and at night the stars fill the sky: 'midnight's all a glimmer'.

- b) This poem is filled with vivid descriptions and imagery which bring Yeats' vision to life for us.

The first phrase which really brought the Lake Isle to life for me is in the second stanza. He describes the mist at daybreak as 'the veils of the morning', and this beautiful metaphor is most effective in capturing the gentle haziness of the start to another serene, perfect day on Innisfree. I can easily imagine the dew dropping slowly, like peace itself, from these gauzy veils.

Another phrase which caught my eye and made me think more deeply about the scene Yeats creates is 'evening full of the linnet's wings'. I thought this was a most unusual image in that I expected the poet to mention the bird's song rather than the noise its wings make as it flies. However, when I examined the line more closely, I found that it actually conjured up an even more peaceful scene than a description of birdsong ever could. The reason for this is that I was forced to think about how quiet it must be on the island if the whirr of this little bird's wings can fill the air.

The final image which transports me to the Lake Isle and makes me share Yeats' longing for it is in the last stanza. Recalled again to the present, Yeats says that his longing for Innisfree is with him 'night and day'. When he is standing 'on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,' the poet still hears, deep within him, 'lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore'. The soft, alliterative 'l', and 's' sounds emphasise the tranquillity of the scene, while the repetition of the consonants mirrors the repetitive motion of the water as it gently moves forward and

back. The assonance in this line, combined with the fact that the vowel sounds are broad, again reinforces the slow pace of life on the island, where the only sound is the small waves of the lake lapping against the shore.

Yeats' description of the Lake Isle is so wonderfully evocative that I can completely understand why this place was somewhere that he carried with him always, 'in the deep heart's core.'