



# The Lake Isle of Innisfree

W.B. Yeats

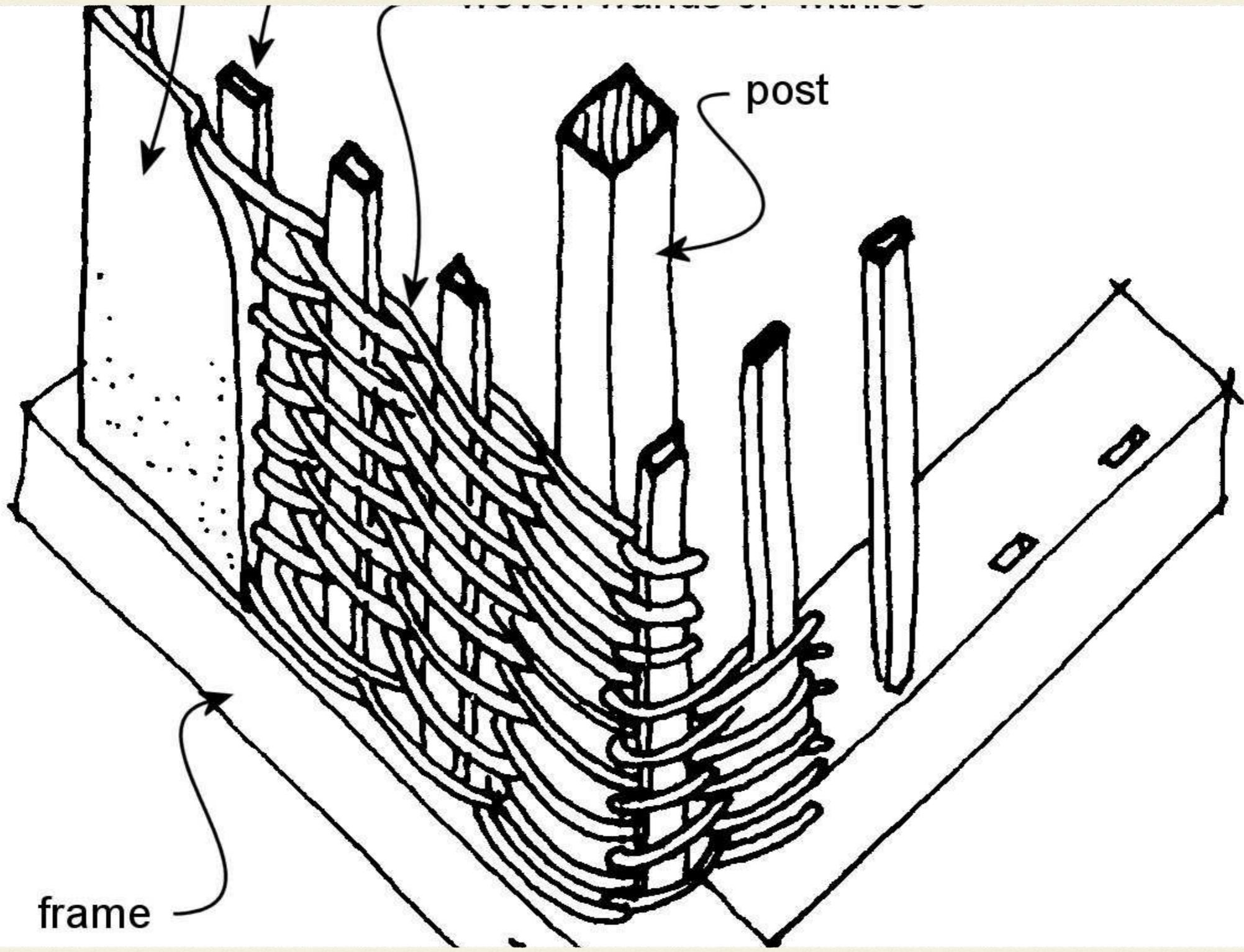
# Background

- \* Yeats was living in London at the time
- \* He was homesick for Ireland
- \* Saw a fountain in a shop window
- \* Sound of water reminded him of lake water



# First Stanza

- \* Formal opening
- \* Allusion to the biblical story of the prodigal son
- \* Echoes words of the prodigal son in the Bible
- \* Biblical overtones reinforce the idea of Innisfree being almost a holy place
- \* Childhood home is a place of serenity and simplicity



frame

post



- \* Will be self-sufficient on the island
- \* Only sounds will be of nature
- \* Lake Isle is timeless: no hint of the modern world in Yeats' vision
- \* Note the use of the future tense



# Second Stanza

- \* Future tense is abandoned in favour of the present tense
- \* It is as if Yeats is there
- \* The Lake Isle is a perfect place at all times of day and night
- \* Soft sounds - sibilance etc. - in the stanza create a sense of peace and calm





# Third Stanza

- \* We are brought back to opening lines
- \* Repetition reinforces the solemnity of the emotions
- \* Alliteration and assonance emphasise the tranquillity of the scene
- \* Broad vowels slow down the movement of the poem
- \* Contrast with Yeats' reality
- \* We can empathise with Yeats' vision
- \* Monosyllabic final line drives home the simple strength of the message



# Brief Overview

- \* Repetition of the word 'I' makes this an intensely personal poem
- \* Repetition of key phrases highlights Yeats' longing to escape to the Lake Isle
- \* Archaic language / biblical allusion create impression of timeless, heavenly place



- \* Simple precision of language reflects the simplicity of the life the poet wishes to live on the Lake Isle
- \* Change to present tense shows how caught up Yeats is in his dream
- \* Present tense also gives the idea that the Lake Isle is a perfect constant in an imperfect, ever-changing world.



- \* Lyrical and musical language: 'for peace comes dropping slow', 'lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore' etc.
- \* This conveys the beauty and serenity of the Lake Isle
- \* Long lines and broad vowel sounds slow down the pace of the poem - reflecting the slow pace of life Yeats wishes to live on the Isle.

