

Sailing to Byzantium

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That is no country for old men
The young in one another's arms
Birds in the trees

Those dying generations at their song
The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas
Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all-summer long
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies
Caught in that sensual music all neglect
Monuments of unageing intellect

An aged man is but a paltry thing
A tattered coat upon a stick
Unless soul clap its hands and sing
And louder sing for every tatter in its mortal dress

Nor is there singing school but studying
Monuments of its own magnificence
And therefore I have sailed the seas and come
To the holy city of Byzantium

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To the holy city of Byzantium

O sages standing in God's holy fire
As in the gold mosaic of a wall
Come from the holy fire
Perne in a gyre
Be the singing masters of my soul

Consume my heart away; sick with desire
And fastened to a dying animal
It knows not what it is; and gather me
Into the artifice of eternity

Once out of nature I shall never take
My bodily form from any natural thing
But such a form as grecian goldsmiths make
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling
To keep a drowsy emperor awake
Or set upon a golden bough to sing
To lords and ladies of Byzantium
Of what is past, or passing, or to come