William Butler Yeats

“The Stolen Child”

WHERE dips the rocky highland

Of Sleuth Wood in the lake,

There lies a leafy island

Where flapping herons wake

The drowsy water rats;

There we’ve hid our faery vats,

Full of berrys

And of reddest stolen cherries.

*Come away, O human child!*

*To the waters and the wild*

*With a faery, hand in hand,*

*For the world’s more full of weeping than you can understand.*

Where the wave of moonlight glosses

The dim gray sands with light,

Far off by furthest Rosses

We foot it all the night,

Weaving olden dances

Mingling hands and mingling glances

Till the moon has taken flight;

To and fro we leap

And chase the frothy bubbles,

While the world is full of troubles

And anxious in its sleep.

*Come away, O human child!*

*To the waters and the wild*

*With a faery, hand in hand,*

*For the world’s more full of weeping than you can understand.*

Where the wandering water gushes

From the hills above Glen-Car,

In pools among the rushes

That scare could bathe a star,

We seek for slumbering trout

And whispering in their ears

Give them unquiet dreams;

Leaning softly out

From ferns that drop their tears

Over the young streams.

*Come away, O human child!   
To the waters and the wild   
With a faery, hand in hand,   
For the world’s more full of weeping than you can understand.*

Away with us he’s going,

The solemn-eyed:

He’ll hear no more the lowing

Of the calves on the warm hillside

Or the kettle on the hob

Sing peace into his breast,

Or see the brown mice bob

Round and round the oatmeal chest.

*For he comes, the human child,   
To the waters and the wild   
With a faery, hand in hand,   
For the world’s more full of weeping than he can understand.*

(“The Stolen Child” was published in 1889 in Yeats’ collection, *The Wanderings of Oisin and Other Poems*.)