

Anne Gregory

For Anne Gregory by William butler Yeats

Stanza 1

*Never shall a young man,
Thrown into despair
By those great honey-coloured
Ramparts at your ear,
Love you for yourself alone
And not your yellow hair.*

The poem starts with the speaker addressing Anne Gregory. The speaker says that her beautiful honey-coloured hair can make any man fall in love with her. This love is not for Anne but for her beautiful features. Anne's gorgeous hair have been compared to walls, symbolising outer beauty that prevents anyone from looking inside her soul. This beauty can capture any man's attention so that he may never be able to look beyond that beauty and into Anne's character. This is what makes the speaker believe that no man can love Anne, for what she is, without her beauty. One can love her only for her beautiful yellow hair and her beauty.

Stanza 2

*But I can get a hair-dye
And set such colour there,
Brown, or black, or carrot,
That young men in despair
May love me for myself alone
And not my yellow hair.*

In the second stanza, Anne replies to the speaker of the first stanza. She says that what is visible from the outside is very superficial and not important. She gives an example of her beautiful hair, that she can change the colour of her hair and dye them in black, brown or carrot. Just like the colour of her hair is changeable, outer beauty of any kind is changeable hence and not true. She wants to tell the speaker that anyone falling in love with her must see the actual person behind the beauty. Anne thinks that young men, who fall in love

with her, must love her for what she is and not for her yellow hair.

Stanza 3

*I heard an old religious man
But yesternight declare
That he had found a text to prove
That only God, my dear,
Could love you for yourself alone
And not your yellow hair.*

In the third and final stanza of the poem, the speaker replies to Anne's statement about love for internal and not external beauty. The speaker mentions an old religious man, who announced that he had found a text in which it is written that only God is capable of looking beyond external beauty. Here speaker means that humans do not have the depth and understanding to look inside the soul of a person. Humans are always carried away by the shine and glitter of outer beauty and they never care to know the person behind the beautiful appearance. Therefore, the speaker concludes that only God can love Anne only for herself and not for her beauty.