

T H E

C O L L E C T E D

P O E M S

O F

W. B.

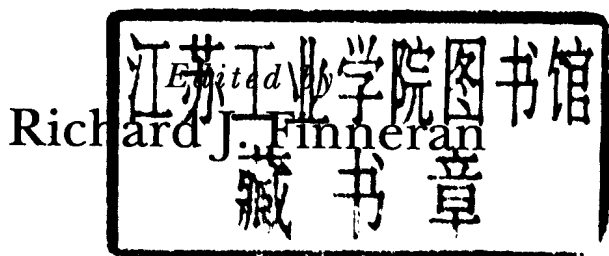
Y E A T S

EDITED BY RICHARD J. FINNERAN

REVISED SECOND EDITION

THE COLLECTED POEMS OF  
W. B. YEATS

REVISED SECOND EDITION



SCRIBNER PAPERBACK POETRY



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# PREFACE

## *to the Second Edition*

This edition supersedes *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats: A New Edition*, first published in 1989. Some minor corrections and additions were made in reprintings of that edition, but the present text offers more substantial changes. Most of these derive from James Pethica's study of the manuscripts of [*Last Poems*] for his forthcoming edition in the Cornell Yeats series. In particular, his discovery that a holograph version of the final stanza of part III of "Three Songs to the One Burden" almost surely postdates the final corrected typescript has resulted in several changes to the text. I have also accepted his arguments that the revisions to "John Kinsella's Lament for Mrs. Mary Moore" for a projected new series of *Broadsides* were not intended for the text of the poem to be included in [*Last Poems*] and that certain typescripts of "Cuchulain Comforted" and "The Black Tower" are probably posthumous.

An attentive reader of the Cornell Yeats edition will notice several places where the archival material offers alternative readings to those provided here, such as the possibility that "The soul's perfection is from peace;" should be added between lines 55–56 of "Under Ben Bulbin." As I argued in *Editing Yeats's Poems: A Reconsideration* (1990) and my chapter in *Representing Modernist Texts: Editing as Interpretation*, ed. George Bornstein (1991), the notion of a "final" or "definitive" text of Yeats's poems is fundamentally illusory. This is especially true for those works which were not published in his lifetime. Among the many problems one might

mention is the difficulty of distinguishing between the hands of Yeats and of his wife, as well as our further uncertainty about the date and authority of revisions in his wife's hand. An electronic edition of the poetry in progress, edited by myself and several others, will be able to present both the alternative texts and the manuscript materials from which they derive.

I am of course indebted to James Pethica for numerous discussions about the textual problems in [*Last Poems*]; and to my collaborators on the electronic edition, particularly George Bornstein and William H. O'Donnell, for continued advice. I am also grateful to Scott Moyers of Scribner for his care in seeing this edition through the press.

*Mandeville, Louisiana*  
*January 29, 1996*

R.J.F.

## PREFACE

This edition is essentially a reconstruction of the expanded version of *The Collected Poems* (1933) which as of June 22, 1937, Yeats had planned to publish "in about two years' time." To the 1933 volume have been added the poems published in the section "Parnell's Funeral and Other Poems" in *A Full Moon in March*, 1935 (except "Three Songs to the Same Tune," later revised as "Three Marching Songs"); the poems from *New Poems*, 1938; and the poems included on a manuscript table of contents for a volume of poetry and plays Yeats had projected during the last few weeks of his life (published posthumously as *Last Poems and Two Plays*, 1939). The notes from the *Collected Poems* and the music from *New Poems* have been included as appendices. The only comment from the Preface to *A Full Moon in March* relevant to the poetry is quoted in the editor's Explanatory Notes. *Last Poems and Two Plays* did not offer any ancillary materials.

The texts in this volume are taken from the revised edition of *The Poems* (1989) in the Macmillan Collected Works of W. B. Yeats (Volume I). The textual policy for both editions has been to present the final versions of the poems authorized by Yeats. The copy-texts therefore consist of printed editions (some with corrections by Yeats), manuscripts, typescripts, and corrected proofs. Emendation has been held to a minimum. For example, there has been virtually no attempt to regularize Yeats's unorthodox punctuation, nor has the spelling of Gaelic names been corrected or made uniform unless Yeats himself established a standard spelling (as with "Cuchulain" or "Oisín"). Readers interested in these matters will find a list of the copy-texts and a

tabular presentation of all emendations in *The Poems*, as well as a fuller discussion in the editor's *Editing Yeats's Poems: A Reconsideration* (1990).

The Explanatory Notes attempt to elucidate all *direct* allusions in the poems. Attention is directed to the headnote, which explains the principles of annotation.

Any project of this scope is of course the work not only of one individual but of various hands. I should first like to thank Anne Yeats and Michael B. Yeats, not only for authorizing me to undertake this project but also for giving me free access to their collections of Yeats's books and manuscripts, without which its completion would have been quite impossible.

Of the many scholars who contributed to this edition, my greatest debt by far is to Brendan O Hehir, who not only provided me with much of the information on Irish materials in the Notes but also saved me from numerous errors. His combination of precise knowledge and generosity in sharing it is a rare virtue. I should also like to give special thanks to George Bornstein, whose advice on many matters I have valued, as I have his friendship. And I thank John Glusman and Robert Kimzey of Macmillan, New York, for their support of this project and their patience, and John Woodside for his careful attention to the proofs.

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For the financial support which enabled me to undertake my editing of Yeats's poems, I am most grateful to the American Council of Learned Societies; the American Philosophical Society; the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery; the Graduate Council on Research, Tulane University; and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

I would like to dedicate this edition to Richard and Catherine, my constant joy.

*Mandeville, Louisiana*  
*September 21, 1988*

R.J.F.



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