

Joseph Gahagan Prize-Winning Poem 2011
By Janet Leahy

If William Butler Yeats

would arise today
and go to his small cabin in Innisfree
to his nine bean rows and his bee-loud glade
would he take insecticide for pests that dine
on climbing vines of beans
and protective netting against the stinging bees, if he
would arise and go today

In Innisfree, Yeats felt peace drop slowly
from the veils of morning
for him, noon held a purple glow, and evening
a sky of linnet's wings
What, I wonder, was he smoking, or was it the
drink of Irish Meade that brought
the purple glow to midday
and in Ireland, most often, the veil of morning
is seen through clouds of showers
yet . . .
the linnet's wings of evening, lovely

If he would arise today and go to Innisfree
to hear the water lapping, to stand on
the roadway or the pavement gray
would he take his laptop
post a new poem on his face-book page
carry his iphone so he could twitter pictures
of the buzzing glade
A warning to Will
if he should go today—don't
stand on the roadway holding the flag
of your latest poem
today life rushes by with great hurry
great distraction—
one does not listen to
the water lapping with low sounds
by the shore
one does not hear its rhythmic pounding
in the heart's deep core

