

## THE SECOND COMING

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all convictions, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;  
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.  
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out  
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi  
Troubles my sight: a waste of desert sand;  
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,  
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,  
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it  
Wind shadows of the indignant desert birds.  
The darkness drops again but now I know  
That twenty centuries of stony sleep  
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,  
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,  
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

*William Butler Yeats (1865-1939), Irish Nobel Prize winner*

**Vocabulary:**

Gyre

Convictions

Indignant

Vexed

1. What does the title imply (the second coming of what)?
2. Draw an image of the first two lines.
3. Why does the speaker think it is the Second Coming? What events prompt this thought?
4. Where does the strange beast exist? What phrase tells you this?
5. What sort of foreshadowing about the novel might Achebe be setting up with this title, that is, why would he have chosen this title for his novel?