



The Lake Isle of Innisfree

W.B. Yeats

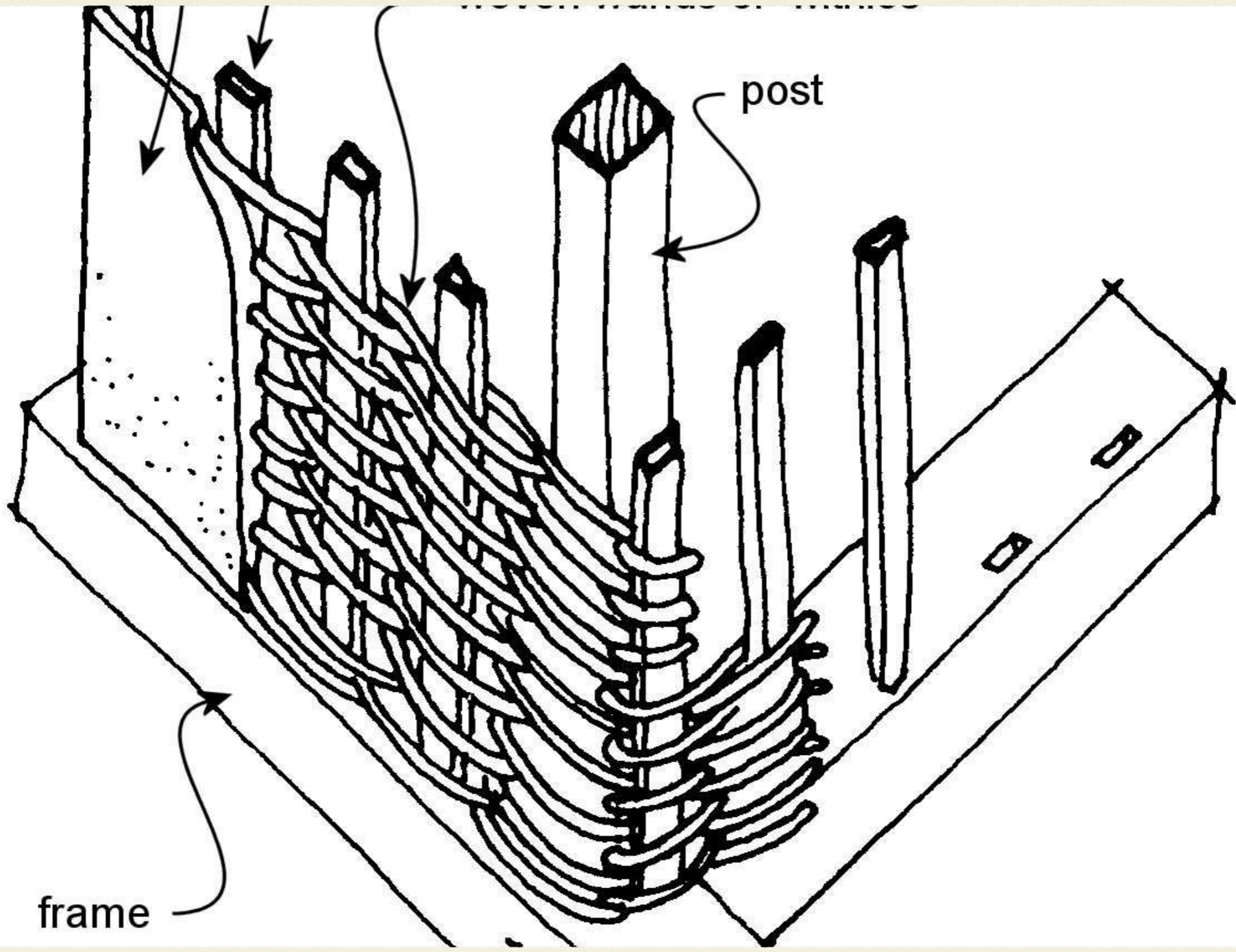
Background

- * Yeats was living in London at the time
- * He was homesick for Ireland
- * Saw a fountain in a shop window
- * Sound of water reminded him of lake water



First Stanza

- * Formal opening
- * Allusion to the biblical story of the prodigal son
- * Echoes words of the prodigal son in the Bible
- * Biblical overtones reinforce the idea of Innisfree being almost a holy place
- * Childhood home is a place of serenity and simplicity



frame

post



- * Will be self-sufficient on the island
- * Only sounds will be of nature
- * Lake Isle is timeless: no hint of the modern world in Yeats' vision
- * Note the use of the future tense



Second Stanza

- * Future tense is abandoned in favour of the present tense
- * It is as if Yeats is there
- * The Lake Isle is a perfect place at all times of day and night
- * Soft sounds - sibilance etc. - in the stanza create a sense of peace and calm





Third Stanza

- * We are brought back to opening lines
- * Repetition reinforces the solemnity of the emotions
- * Alliteration and assonance emphasise the tranquillity of the scene
- * Broad vowels slow down the movement of the poem
- * Contrast with Yeats' reality
- * We can empathise with Yeats' vision
- * Monosyllabic final line drives home the simple strength of the message



Brief Overview

- * Repetition of the word 'I' makes this an intensely personal poem
- * Repetition of key phrases highlights Yeats' longing to escape to the Lake Isle
- * Archaic language / biblical allusion create impression of timeless, heavenly place



- * Simple precision of language reflects the simplicity of the life the poet wishes to live on the Lake Isle
- * Change to present tense shows how caught up Yeats is in his dream
- * Present tense also gives the idea that the Lake Isle is a perfect constant in an imperfect, ever-changing world.



- * Lyrical and musical language: 'for peace comes dropping slow', 'lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore' etc.
- * This conveys the beauty and serenity of the Lake Isle
- * Long lines and broad vowel sounds slow down the pace of the poem - reflecting the slow pace of life Yeats wishes to live on the Isle.

