

11

O sweetheart, hear you  
Your lover's tale;  
A man shall have sorrow  
When friends him fail.

For he shall know then  
Friends be untrue  
And a little ashes  
Their words come to.

But one unto him  
Will softly move  
And softly woo him  
In ways of love.

His hand is under  
Her smooth round breast;  
So he who has sorrow  
Shall have rest.

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### Notes

This was No. 18 in the 1907 edition.

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According to Ellmann, this is both a 'Gogarty' poem, about betrayed friendship, and a 'Nora' poem, about the compensations of sexual love.

The immemorial vacuity of 'words' (broached in the previous poem) is once again signalled here.

There are faint echoes (Ls. 13-14) of the 'Song of Songs' here which will emerge more strongly in No. 17. The biblical context of 'ashes', signalling the beginning and the end of all human endeavour, is also present.

'Smooth round breast' slows the pace considerably,