

**1914**

**TO A FRIEND WHOSE WORK HAS COME TO  
NOTHING (From Responsibilities)**

**William Butler Yeats**

**Yeats, William Butler (1865-1939) - Irish poet and dramatist, widely considered one of the greatest English-speaking poets of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was a leader of the Irish Renaissance and later a devoted spiritualist. Yeats received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1923. To a Friend Whose Work has Come to Nothing (1914) - Opening lines: Now all the truth is out, / Be secret and take defeat ...**

**TO A FRIEND**

Now all the truth is out,  
Be secret and take defeat  
From any brazen throat,  
For how can you compete,  
Being honour bred, with one  
Who, were it proved he lies,  
Were neither shamed in his own  
Nor in his neighbours' eyes?  
Bred to a harder thing  
Than Triumph, turn away  
And like a laughing string  
Whereon mad fingers play  
Amid a place of stone,  
Be secret and exult,  
Because of all things know  
That is most difficult.

**THE END**