

# "Leda and the Swan"

By William Butler Yeats

*Transcription, correction, editorial commentary, and  
markup by Students and Staff of the University of Virginia*

# THE DIAL

JUNE 1924

## WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

### LEDA AND THE SWAN

1 A sudden blow: the great wings beating still  
2 Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed  
3 By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,  
4 He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.  
5 How can those terrified vague fingers push  
6 The feathered glory from her loosening thighs?  
7 And how can body, laid in that white rush,  
8 But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?  
9 A shudder in the loins engenders there  
10 The broken wall, the burning roof and tower  
11 And Agamemnon dead.  
12 Being so caught up,  
13 So mastered by the brute blood of the air,  
14 Did she put on his knowledge with his power  
15 Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?