YEATS

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BRENDAN KENNELLY

HE SUMMONED VOICES from the urgent past
To scatter darkness now and still to come,
The die of poetry was quickly cast
And truth beat faintly as a distant drum ;
Assiduously, he hawked and scoured his heart
For perfect subtleties of right and wrong,
Nobly resolved to play the maker's part,
Retrieving something lost to myth and song.

He chronicled his blind and bitter land,
Stretched always on the rack of love or hate,
Unyielding woman, peasants, heroes and
Angry men who shaped a country's fate ;
Explored at length the unrelenting dark,
Impelled by piercing searchlights of desire,
Discovering his city, did not shirk
The burden of the architect of fire.

He hammered on truth's anvil till he made
Such images as must endure,
Immortalised the house that has decayed,
The fallen lintel, rotted roof and floor ;
Became what he created in his blood
Through years of thinking in the marrowbone —
Man and poet contracted into God
Beyond the certainties in book and stone.