

# To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Nothing

By William Butler Yeats

Now all the truth is out,  
Be secret and take defeat  
From any brazen throat,  
For how can you compete,  
Being honor bred, with one  
Who were it proved he lies  
Were neither shamed in his own  
Nor in his neighbors' 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 known  
That is most difficult.

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Source: The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats (1989)