**"YEATS CAN CERTAINLY BE CALLED A GREAT IRISH POET."  DISCUSS.**  
Introduction  
I certainly agree with this statement. (Tip: state broadly your attitude to the subject of the question).The work of W.B. Yeats is saturated with evocative, descriptive imagery, deeply explored personal feelings, universal, but profound, subject matter and strong political opinions. He isn't just a great figure in world literature but he is a very patriotic poet who truly loved  Ireland. I would like to further explore this statement by referring to the following poems: "Lake Isle of Innisfree," "The Wild Swans at Coole," "Easter 1916," "September 1913," "An Irish Airman forsees his death" and "Stares Nest by My Window." (Tip: list of the poems you wish to address in the introduction, it shows the examiner that you are going to really explore the question and provide evidence. Aim to explore 3 or 4 poems in depth and at least mention another two).  
  
  
  
Main Text  
There is a lot of natural images and references to nature in Yeats' poetry. These appear in poems that may be seen as nature poems at first but on closer examination it is evident that such references are just a beautiful poetic way of exploring complex subject matter of the poem.  
"Lake Isle of Innisfree" is full of such images:  
**"Nine bean rows will I have there**  
**A hive for honey bee**  
**And live alone in the bee loud glade."**  
(Tip: punctuation - comas, full stops- nearly always stay within the quotation marks in case you are wondering. Double quotation marks are more widely accepted).  
But this is used to contrast the harmony of nature to his own feelings- obviously he wants to escape the **"pavement gray"**of London. So the major theme  raised in this poem is escapism.  
To further emphasise this harmony Yeats uses assonance and alliteration:  
**"Lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore."**  
The unusual latinate sentence structure also reminds the reader of the way in which the Bible is written, further contributing to the atmosphere of peace created here as well as touching hearts ofIrish readers. (Tip: throw in a reference to the question to maintain your angle, as opposed to a straight "all-I-know-about-this-poem" style of writing).  
  
A similar way of writing is used in "Wild Swans at Coole." (Tip: as you move from one paragraph to another try to connect them to give the essay more continuity and integrity). The poet uses striking vivid imagery of "clamorous wings" of the swans, the "bell-beat of their wings" to create an atmosphere of love and togetherness among the swans:  
**"Unwearied still, lover by lover...**  
**Their hearts have not grown old."** (Tip: try to give some evidence, quotations in this case, for each point you make).  
However, the poet himself laments his unrequited life-long love to Maud Gonne and the fact that he is ageing. Obviously, deep personal feelings are explored here through the use of nature-inspired imagery, a fascinating way to express oneself. It could also be a reference to the general atmosphere that dominated Ireland in those years: togetherness and love moved down on the priorities list through the Civil War. (Tip: this last point is just something I thought up on the spot but it addresses the question and is backed by a quotation, so it will fly. These little things make your essay special and show that you are on the ball as you constantly maintain your angle. Everyone will write about the big well-known facts and obvious points regarding a given poet, but poetry also has a beautiful openness for interpretation. Use it to get some marks!).  
  
The poems "Stare's Nest by My Window" and "Easter 1916" also contain extended metaphors describing the natural world. But the subject matter shifts from deeply personal to political and patriotic. In "Easter 1916" the poet expresses complex feelings towards the heroes of the Rising. He admires them for their braveness while admitting that the Rising was a horrible event for many - **"a terrible beauty is born."**To illustrate this he says that the rebels' hearts seem to have been**"enchanted to a stone to rouble the living stream."** (Tip: quotations look good both as stand alone lines or incorporated into a sentence, but be careful to not have to alter them as that limits your right to put quotation marks around them. A paraphrased allusion is legitimate in an essay but is a plain mistake if it is in quotation marks and marks will be deducted by the examiner).  
The peace and harmony of nature sharply contrast with the desperate heroism of Countess Markievicz, Thomas McDonagh et al and emphasise their contribution to the history of this country.  
The poet found that the act if the bees building in the **"crevices of loosening masonry"** is similar to his idea of what the Irish people should be aspiring to do in "Stare's Nest by My Window." This is a fascinatingly precise image. The bees symbolise the Irish people who should commit themselves to the hard work of helping to restore the country, the loosening masonry is the fading away British presence.  
Apart from natural imagery there are also other types of images in this poem, very impersonal. **"A house is burnt... a man is killed,"** an image of a soldier in his blood, a barricade. The use of the indefinite article attributes to the sheer horror of the civil war. It shows that people are doing something terrible to one another.  
  
Yeats passion for the fate of the country is also very obvious in "September 1913." He sees the Catholic middle class as a miserly greedy ignorant crowd (tip: adjectives are a sign of your eloquence, feel free to use them!) indifferent to Ireland but only **"adding the halfpence to the pence and prayer to shivering prayer**." Yeats uses a lot of rhetorical questions, e.g.  
**"Was it for this that the Wild Geese**  
**Spread their grey wings upon every tide,**  
**For this that all the blood was shed,**  
**For this Edward Fitzgerald died..."**  
This is very accusative and also unequivocally directed at those who **"fumble in a greasy till."**  
Yeats contrasts the people of the past and those who now live in this country and concludes that all the heroism, **"delirium of the brave"** might have been in vain provided that the people of the present do not appreciate their country at all:  
**"Romantic Ireland's dead and gone**  
**It's with O'Leary in the grave."**  
  
There is, of course, a marked change in Yeats' attitude three years later and he is not afraid to admit it in "Easter 1916", which further emphasises how Yeats truly and unconditionally loved Ireland.  
  
Conclusion  
Yeats' subject matter is universal: country, love, nature, ageing, war, and even death and the purpose of life in "An Irish Airman Forsees His Death." So he writes about the themes usually raised by poets. But his ability to find amazing analogies between our lives and nature, the strength of his conviction, his talent to write in perfect rhyme with a memorable rhythm makes him a magnificent Irish poet.