

# *The Cat and the Moon*

**William Butler Yeats**

**Japanese Translation Teturo Sano**

**Directed & Song Composed by Kaoru Matsumoto**

**Blind Beggar: Sengoro Shigeyama XIV**

**Lame Beggar: Shigeru Shigeyama**

**Saint: Kaoru Matsumoto**

**(English Script adjusted by Akiko Manabe)**

Saint: *The cat went here and there  
And the moon spun round like a top,  
And the nearest kin of the moon,  
The creeping cat, looked up.  
Black Minnaloushe stared at the moon,  
For wander and wail as he would,  
The pure cold light in the sky  
Troubled his animal blood.*

*Two beggars enter—a blind man with a lame man on his back. The Blind Beggar is counting the paces.*

Blind Beggar : One thousand and six, one thousand and seven, one thousand and nine. Look well now, for we should be in sight of the holy well of Saint Colman. The beggar at the cross-roads said it was one thousand paces from where he stood and a few paces over. Look well now, can you see the big ash-tree that's above it?

Lame Beggar: No, not yet.

BB: Then we must have taken a wrong turn; flighty you always were, and maybe before the day is over you will have me drowned in Kiltartan River or maybe in the sea itself.

LB: I have brought you the right way, but you are a lazy man, Blind Man, and you make very short strides.

BB: It's great daring you have, and how could I make a long stride and you on my back from the peep o' day?

LB: And maybe the beggar of the cross-roads was only making it up when he said a thousand paces and a few paces more. You and I, being beggars, know the way of beggars, and maybe he never paced it at all, being a lazy man.

BB: Get up. It's too much talk you have.

LB: But as I was saying, he being a lazy man—O, O, O, stop pinching the calf of my leg and I'll not say another word till I'm spoken to.

*They go round the stage as they move the following song is sung.*

S : *Minnaloushe runs in the grass  
Lifting his delicate feet.  
Do you dance, Minnaloushe, do you dance ?  
When two close kindred meet  
What better than call a dance ?  
Maybe the moon may learn,  
Tired of that courtly fashion,*

*A new dance turn.*

BB: Do you see the big ash-tree ?

LB: I do then, and the wall under it, and the flat stone, and the things upon the stone; and here is a good dry place to kneel in.

BB: You may get down so. I begin to have it in my mind that I am a great fool, and it was you who egged me on with your flighty talk

LB: How should you be a great fool to ask the saint to give you back your two eyes?

BB: There is many gives money to a blind man and would give nothing but a curse to a whole man, and if it was not for one thing—but no matter anyway.

LB: If I speak out all that's in my mind you won't take a blow at me at all ?

BB: I will not this time.

LB: And maybe we'll see the blessed saint this day, for there's an odd one sees him, and maybe that will be a grander thing than having my two legs, though legs are a grand thing.

BB: You're getting flighty again, Lame Man ; what could be better for you than to have your two legs?

LB: Do you think now will the saint put an ear on him at all, and we without an Ave or a Patemoster to put before the prayer or after the prayer?

BB: Now the Church says that it is a good thought, and a sweet thought, and a comfortable thought, that every man may have a saint to look after him, and I, being blind, give it out to all the world that the bigger the sinner the better pleased is the saint. I am sure and certain that Saint Colman would not have us two different from what we are.

LB: I'll not give in to that.

BB: Is it contradicting me you are? Are you in reach of my arm? *swinging stick.*

LB: I'm not, Blind Man, you couldn't touch me at all; but as I was saying. . .

S: Will you be cured or will you be blessed ?

LB: Lord save us, that is the saint's voice and we not on our knees.

*They kneel.*

BB: Is he standing before us, Lame Man?

LB: I cannot see him at all. It is in the ash-tree he is, or up in the air.

S: Will you be cured or will you be blessed ?

LB: There he is again.

BB: I'll be cured of my blindness.

S: I am a saint and lonely. Will you become blessed and stay blind and we will be together always?

BB: No, no, your Reverence, if I have to choose, I'll have the sight of my two eyes, for those that have their sight are always stealing my things and telling me lies, and some maybe that are near me. So don't take it bad of me, Holy Man, that I ask the sight of my two eyes.

LB: No one robs him and no one tells him lies; it's all in his head, it is. He's had his tongue on me all day because he thinks I stole a sheep of his.

BB: It was the feel of his sheepskin coat put it into my head, but my sheep was black, they say, and he tells me, Holy Man, that his sheepskin is of the most lovely white wool so that it is a joy to be looking at it.

S: Lame Man, will you be cured or will you be blessed?

LB: What would it be like to be blessed?

S: You would be of the kin of the blessed saints and of the martyrs.

LB: Is it true now that they have a book and that they write the names of the blessed in that book?

S: Many a time I have seen the book, and your name would be in it.

LB: It would be a grand thing to have two legs under me, but I have it in my mind that it would be a grander thing to have my name in that book.

S: It would be a grander thing.

LB: I will stay lame, Holy Man, and I will be blessed.

S: In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit I give this Blind Man sight and I make this Lame Man blessed.

BB: I see it all now, the blue sky and the big ash-tree and the well and the flat stone,—all as I have heard the people say—and the things the praying people put on the stone, the beads and the candles and the leaves torn out of prayer-books, and the hairpins and the buttons. It is a great sight and a blessed sight, but I don't see yourself, Holy Man—is it up in the big tree you are?

LB: Why, there he is in front of you and he laughing out of his wrinkled face.

BB: Where, where?

LB: Why, there, between you and the ash-tree.

BB: There's nobody there—you're at your lies again.

LB: I am blessed, and that is why I can see the holy saint.

BB: But if I don't see the saint, there's something else I can see.

LB: The blue sky and green leaves are a great sight, and a strange sight to one that has been long blind.

BB: There is a stranger sight than that, and that is the skin of my own black sheep on your back.

LB: Haven't I been telling you from the peep o' day that my sheepskin is that white it would dazzle you?

BB: Are you so swept with the words that you've never thought that when I had my own two eyes, I'd see what colour was on it?

LB: I never thought of that.

BB: Are you that flighty?

LB: I am that flighty. But am I not blessed, and it's a sin to speak against the blessed.

BB: Well, I'll speak against the blessed.

LB: Don't lay a hand on me. Would you be as bad as Caesar and as Herod and Nero and the other wicked emperors of antiquity?

BB: Where'll I hit him, for the love of God, where'll I hit him?

*The Blind Beggar beats Lame Beggar: The Blind Beggar goes out*

LB: That is a soul lost, Holy Man.

S: Maybe so.

LB: I'd better be going, Holy Man, for he'll rouse the whole country against me.

S: He'll do that.

LB: And I have it in my mind not to even myself again with the martyrs, and the holy confessors, till I am more used to being blessed.

S: Bend down your back.

LB: What for, Holy Man?

S: That I may get up on it.

LB: But my lame legs would never bear the weight of you.

S: I'm up now.

LB: I don't feel you at all.

S: I don't weigh more than a grasshopper.  
LB: You do not.  
S: Are you happy?  
LB: I would be if I was right sure I was blessed.  
S: Haven't you got me for a friend?  
LB: I have so.  
S: Then you're blessed.  
LB: Will you see that they put my name in the book?  
S: I will then.  
LB: Let us be going, Holy Man.  
S: But you must bless the road.  
LB: I haven't the right words.  
S: What do you want words for? Bow to what is before you, bow to what is behind you, bow to what is to the left of you,  
bow to what is to the right of you.

*The Lame Beggar begins to bow.*

S: That's no good.  
LB: No good, Holy Man?  
S: No good at all. You must dance.  
LB: But how can I dance? Ain't I a lame man?  
S: Aren't you blessed?  
LB: Maybe so.  
S: Aren't you a miracle?  
LB: I am, Holy Man.  
S: Then dance, and that'll be a miracle.

*The Lame Beggar begins to dance*

S: *Minnaloushe creeps through the grass*  
LB: *Minnaloushe creeps through the grass*  
S: *From moonlit place to place.*  
LB: *From moonlit place to place.*  
S: *The sacred moon overhead*  
LB: *The sacred moon overhead*  
S & LB: *Has taken a new phase.*  
S: *Does Minnaloushe know that his pupils*  
LB: *Does Minnaloushe know that his pupils*  
S: *Will pass from change to change,*  
LB: *Will pass from change to change,*  
S: *And that from round to crescent,*  
LB: *From crescent to round they range ?*  
S & LB: *Minnaloushe creeps through the grass*  
*Alone, important and wise,*  
*And lifts to the changing moon*  
*His changing eyes*

END

