

W. H. Auden

*Stop All the Clocks*

ENG-112 | Camila Zepp



(Pinterest)

# Wystan Hugh Auden (1907-1973)

- Became one of the most important poets of the 20th century
- Close relationships heavily influenced his writing (especially themes of love and loss)
- Perceived as “anti-romantic” due to exploring emotional detachment and realistic themes
- His poetry is heavily influenced by the political and historical context in Europe



(Wikipedia)

# Time Period and Context



## Early Life (1907-1928)

- Born in York, U.K.
- Graduated from Oxford University (1928)
- Privately published first book, *Poems* (1928)



## Interwar Phase (1929-1938)

- Spent a year in Berlin
- Published *Poems* (1930)
- Married Erika Mann (1935)
- Traveled to Spain and China (1937-1938)



## Later Years (1939-1973)

- Moved to the US (1939)
- Taught at American Universities
- Won Pulitzer Prize ('48) and Bollingen Prize ('53)

# Stop All the Clocks by W. H. Auden (1936)

## Summary

- Narrator mourns the death of a loved one
- Feels the world should stop because of the loss
- Expresses overwhelming, personal grief

## Analysis

- Theme
  - Love, grief, and loss of meaning
- Tone
  - Dramatic -> hopeless
- Symbolism
  - Clocks = time/life
  - Stars = order -> now meaningless
- Key Idea:
  - Love gave the speaker purpose, without it, nothing matters



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