

W. H. Auden

Quotes

*Men, Art, Writing, Love, People, Thinking, Heart, Children, Believe, Book, Stars,
Eye, Lying, Inspirational, Mean, Science, Self, Poetry, Dream, Poet*

Thousands have lived without love, not one without water.

~W. H. Auden

Water is the soul of the Earth.

~W. H. Auden

We are all here on earth to help others; what on earth the others are here for I don't know.

~W. H. Auden

We would rather be ruined than changed. We would rather die in our dread than climb the cross of the moment and let our illusions die.

~W. H. Auden

Civilizations should be measured by the degree of diversity attained and the degree of unity retained.

~W. H. Auden

Herds of reindeer move across Miles and miles of golden moss

~W. H. Auden

All sins tend to be addictive, and the terminal point of addiction is damnation.

~W. H. Auden

'Healing,' Papa would tell me, 'is not a science, but the intuitive art of wooing nature.'

~W. H. Auden

Few people take an interest in Iceland, but in those few the interest is passionate.

~W. H. Auden

No good opera plot can be sensible, for people do not sing when they

are feeling sensible.

~W. H. Auden

The center that I cannot find is known to my unconscious mind.

~W. H. Auden

Dance till the stars come down from the rafters Dance, Dance, Dance
'till you drop.

~W. H. Auden

The only way to spend New Year's Eve is either quietly with friends or
in a brothel. Otherwise when the evening ends and people pair off,
someone is bound to be left in tears.

~W. H. Auden

My deepest feeling about politicians is that they are dangerous lunatics
to be avoided when possible and carefully humored; people, above all,
to whom one must never tell the truth.

~W. H. Auden

Young people, who are still uncertain of their identity, often try on a
succession of masks in the hope of finding the one which suits them -
the one, in fact, which is not a mask.

~W. H. Auden

A poet must never make a statement simply because it sounds
poetically exciting; he must also believe it to be true.

~W. H. Auden

Narcissus does not fall in love with his reflection because it is beautiful,
but because it is his. If it were his beauty that enthralled him, he would
be set free in a few years by its fading.

~W. H. Auden

Now the leaves are falling fast, Nurse's flowers will not last; Nurses to their graves are gone, And the prams go rolling on.

~W. H. Auden

Mad Ireland hurt you into poetry.

~W. H. Auden

A poet can write about a man slaying a dragon, but not about a man pushing a button that releases a bomb.

~W. H. Auden

There's always another story. There's more than meets the eye.

~W. H. Auden

The most important truths are likely to be those which society at that time least wants to hear.

~W. H. Auden

Music is the best means we have of digesting time.

~W. H. Auden

No person can be a great leader unless he takes genuine joy in the successes of those under him.

~W. H. Auden

A professor is someone who talks in someone else's sleep.

~W. H. Auden

Whatever you do, good or bad, people will always have something negative to say

~W. H. Auden

You shall love your crooked neighbour, with your crooked heart.

~W. H. Auden

Swans in the winter air A white perfection have

~W. H. Auden

I'll love you till the ocean
Is folded and hung up to dry
And the seven stars go squawking
Like geese about the sky.

~W. H. Auden

Geniuses are the luckiest of mortals because what they must do is the same as what they most want to do.

~W. H. Auden

In times of joy, all of us wished we possessed a tail we could wag.

~W. H. Auden

History is, strictly speaking, the study of questions; the study of answers belongs to anthropology and sociology.

~W. H. Auden

Nobody is ever sent to Hell: he or she insists on going there.

~W. H. Auden

Those who will not reason, perish in the act. Those who will not act, perish for that reason.

~W. H. Auden

Desire, even in its wildest tantrums, can neither persuade me it is love nor stop me from wishing it were.

~W. H. Auden

Among those whom I like or admire, I can find no common denominator, but among those whom I love, I can: all of them make me laugh.

~W. H. Auden

No human being is innocent, but there is a class of innocent human actions called Games.

~W. H. Auden

And none will hear the postman's knock Without a quickening of the heart. For who can bear to feel himself forgotten?

~W. H. Auden

Between friends differences in taste or opinion are irritating in direct proportion to their triviality.

~W. H. Auden

A person incapable of imaging another world than given to him by his senses would be subhuman, and a person who identifies his imaginary world with the world of sensory fact has become insane.

~W. H. Auden

One rational voice is dumb: over a grave The household of Impulse mourns one dearly loved. Sad is Eros, builder of cities, And weeping anarchic Aphrodite.

~W. H. Auden

The ear tends to be lazy, craves the familiar and is shocked by the unexpected; the eye, on the other hand, tends to be impatient, craves the novel and is bored by repetition.

~W. H. Auden

I'll love you, dear, I'll love you till China and Africa meet and the river jumps over the mountain and the salmon sing in the street.

~W. H. Auden

What the mass media offers is not popular art, but entertainment which is intended to be consumed like food, forgotten, and replaced by a new dish.

~W. H. Auden

You know there are no secrets in America. It's quite different in England, where people think of a secret as a shared relation between two people.

~W. H. Auden

We do not change as we grow up. The difference between the child and the adult is that the former doesn't know who he is and the latter does.

~W. H. Auden

All I have is a voice.

~W. H. Auden

Perhaps there is only one cardinal sin: impatience. Because of impatience we were driven out of Paradise, because of impatience we cannot return.

~W. H. Auden

You owe it to all of us all get on with what you're good at.

~W. H. Auden

Poetry might be defined as the clear expression of mixed feelings.

~W. H. Auden

Death is the sound of distant thunder at a picnic.

~W. H. Auden

In the deserts of the heart Let the healing fountain start.

~W. H. Auden

Every man carries with him through life a mirror, as unique and impossible to get rid of as his shadow.

~W. H. Auden

Dance, dance, dance till you drop.

~W. H. Auden

Language is the mother, not the handmaiden, of thought; words will tell you things you never thought or felt before.

~W. H. Auden

A real book is not one that we read, but one that reads us.

~W. H. Auden

Let all your thinks be thanks.

~W. H. Auden

A poet is, before anything else, a person who is passionately in love with language.

~W. H. Auden

Murder is commoner among cooks than among members of any other profession.

~W. H. Auden

Money cannot buy the fuel of love but is excellent kindling.

~W. H. Auden

There must always be two kinds of art: escape-art, for man needs escape as he needs food and deep sleep, and parable-art, that art which shall teach man to unlearn hatred and learn love.

~W. H. Auden

Into this neutral air Where blind skyscrapers use
Their full height to proclaim
The strength of Collective Man,
Each language pours its vain
Competitive excuse.

~W. H. Auden

All good art is in the nature of a letter written to amuse a sick friend.
Too much art, particularly in our time, is only a letter written to oneself.

~W. H. Auden

Most people enjoy the sight of their own handwriting as they enjoy the smell of their own farts.

~W. H. Auden

The most exciting rhythms seem unexpected and complex, the most beautiful melodies simple and inevitable.

~W. H. Auden

He was my North, my South, my East and West, My working week and my Sunday rest, My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song; I thought that love would last forever: I was wrong.

~W. H. Auden

Cats can be very funny, and have the oddest ways of showing they're glad to see you.

~W. H. Auden

Health is the state about which medicine has nothing to say.

~W. H. Auden

It's better to say, 'I'm suffering,' than to say, 'This landscape is ugly.'

~W. H. Auden

In relation to a writer, most readers believe in the Double Standard: they may be unfaithful to him as often as they like, but he must never, never be unfaithful to them.

~W. H. Auden

The definition of prayer is paying careful and concentrated attention to something other than your own constructions.

~W. H. Auden

A verbal art like poetry is reflective; it stops to think. Music is immediate, it goes on to become.

~W. H. Auden

One cannot review a bad book without showing off.

~W. H. Auden

All that we are not stares back at what we are.

~W. H. Auden

There are good books which are only for adults. There are no good books which are only for children.

~W. H. Auden

To be free is often to be lonely.

~W. H. Auden

Sincerity is technique.

~W. H. Auden

Life is a picnic on a precipice.

~W. H. Auden

Time will say nothing but I told you so, Time only knows the price we have to pay; If I could tell you I would let you know.

~W. H. Auden

Happy the hare at morning, for she cannot read The hunter's waking thoughts.

~W. H. Auden

Good can imagine Evil; but Evil cannot imagine Good.

~W. H. Auden

To discover how to be human now is the reason we follow this star.

~W. H. Auden

Whatever the field under discussion, those who engage in debate must not only believe in each other's good faith, but also in their capacity to arrive at the truth.

~W. H. Auden

The nightingales are sobbing in The orchards of our mothers, And hearts that we broke long ago Have long been breaking others; Tears are round, the sea is deep: Roll them overboard and sleep.

~W. H. Auden

My face looks like a wedding-cake left out in the rain.

~W. H. Auden

A craftsman knows in advance what the finished result will be, while the artist knows only what it will be when he has finished it.

~W. H. Auden

Some writers confuse authenticity, which they ought always to aim at, with originality, which they should never bother about.

~W. H. Auden

Learn from your dreams what you lack.

~W. H. Auden

I think the first prerequisite to civilization is an ability to make polite conversation.

~W. H. Auden

Pleasure is by no means an infallible critical guide, but it is the least fallible.

~W. H. Auden

The lights must never go out, The music must always play

~W. H. Auden

There has been a vast output of critical studies in contemporary poetry, some of them first rate, but I do not think that, as a rule, a poet should read them.

~W. H. Auden

As a poet, there is only one political duty, and that is to defend one's language from corruption.

~W. H. Auden

When I am in the company of scientists, I feel like a shabby curate who has strayed by mistake into a drawing room full of dukes.

~W. H. Auden

The eye likes novelty, but the ear craves familiarity.

~W. H. Auden

The parlour cars and Pullmans are packed also with scented assassins, salad-eaters who murder on milk.

~W. H. Auden

God may reduce you on Judgment Day to tears of shame, reciting by heart the poems you would have written, had your life been good.

~W. H. Auden

Almost all of our relationships begin and most of them continue as forms of mutual exploitation, a mental or physical barter, to be terminated when one or both parties run out of goods.

~W. H. Auden

Some books are undeservedly forgotten; none are undeservedly remembered.

~W. H. Auden

How should we like it were stars to burn
With a passion for us we could
not return? If equal affection cannot be,
Let the more loving one be me.

~W. H. Auden

Related Links:

- Men Quotes
- Art Quotes
- Writing Quotes
- Love Quotes
- People Quotes
- Thinking Quotes
- Heart Quotes
- Children Quotes
- Believe Quotes
- Book Quotes
- Stars Quotes
- Eye Quotes
- Lying Quotes
- Inspirational Quotes
- Mean Quotes
- Science Quotes
- Self Quotes
- Poetry Quotes
- Dream Quotes
- Poet Quotes