

Festivus 2015  
Vasa Clarke

### Some Questions of Absurd Difficulty on the Life and Works of W. H. Auden

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In the seventeenth of Auden's *Sonnets From China*, this country asks the world, "Do you love me as I love you?" The narrator of another Auden poem muses about the future of "my person, all my friends," and this country. The art magazine *Fuck You* was located in this country, where it published an unauthorized poem written by Auden about the joys of gay sex. "The Platonic Blow" was one poem that Auden apparently wrote while living in this country; also while living in this country, Auden recited his poem "Under Which Lyre" as part of commencement ceremonies at Harvard University. For 10 points, name this polity that Auden immigrated to and of which Vasa Clarke, Auden's #1 fan, is a citizen.

ANSWER: the United States of America [or just America; or obvious equivalents]

In this year, Auden may have written a fragment of a poem which notes that "at Twenty we find our friends for ourselves, but it takes Heaven / To find us one when we are Fifty-Seven," despite Auden actually being 61 years old. Another poem written in this year begins by talking about "High Priests of telescopes and cyclotrons" and is the "Ode to Terminus." Auden's most famous poem written in this year describes events which produced a "subjugated plain" filled with the "desperate and slain." A creature living in this year which "cannot master Speech" is noted as having done "deeds quite impossible for Man." For 10 points, name this year, which partially titles an Auden poem about the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia that ended the Prague Spring.

ANSWER: 1968

This character, in addition to being commended by Producers Research and High-Grade Living, fathered five children and thus won the approval of a Eugenist. This follower of the "Instalment Plan" used his money to buy things like a phonograph, a radio, a car and a frigidaire. He "wasn't a scab or odd in his views" despite being loyal to both his Union and to his employers, Fudge Motors Inc. It is claimed of this character that "had anything been wrong, we should certainly have heard." For 10 points, name this anonymous individual who "was found by the Bureau of Statistics to be / One against whom there was no official complaint."

ANSWER: the Unknown Citizen

A citizen of this place in a poem by Auden lost an engagement ring through gambling and is homesick for his girlfriend, who lives in Tungria. A poem by Auden compares this polity to both "the red pre-Cambrian light" and "myself at seventeen." It is noted of this location that "all the literati keep an imaginary friend." Residents of this place include "muscle-bound Marines" who "mutiny for food and pay." Auden's best-known poem about this place is dedicated to Cyril Connolly, and opens by describing how "the piers are pummelled by the waves." For 10 points, name this ancient power whose "fall" was narrated in a poem by W. H. Auden and a book by Edward Gibbon.

ANSWER: Imperial Rome [or answers like a Roman Wall at the first clue]

This title was applied to a 1972 poem which states, "the old Greeks got it all wrong: Narcissus is an oldie," and which ends as "the belly-mind take[s] over down below the diaphragm." A poem with this title ends with "noons of dryness" and "nights of insult," and, according to Genius.com, was about W. H. Auden's sexual relationship with Chester Kallman. The "hermit's carnal ecstasy" takes place during a poem of this title, in which "fashionable madmen raise / Their pedantic boring cry." The best-known poem with this title has a narrator whose lover is "mortal, guilty, but to me / The entirely beautiful." For 10 points, give the title of a really sentimental poem by Auden which opens, "Lay your sleeping head, my love / Human on my faceless arm."

ANSWER: "Lullaby"

A poem about this man asks of the reader, "what apparatus could stave off disaster or cut the brambles of man's error down?" This man had a revelation when he "saw the Devil busy in the wind" under the "doors of nuns and doctors who had sinned." The "fuse of Judgement spluttered in his head," according to Auden, who quoted this man proclaiming things like "All Works, Great Men, Societies are bad" and "the Just shall live by faith." In "September 1 1939," we are told that "accurate scholarship can unearth the whole offense from" this man until the present. For

10 points, name this leader of the Protestant Reformation who was called before the Diet of Worms by Emperor Charles V.

ANSWER: Martin Luther

A poem of this type by Auden disparages Thomas the Rhymer's relationship with the Fairy Queen as indicative of him being a "social climber." Another poem of this type describes Queen Victoria ordering the blowing up of the Old Bailey. Yet another of these short poems pokes fun at Thomas Aquinas and his alleged fondness of wine, "a medicinal juice / That helped him to deduce." All of the "Academic Graffiti" by Auden take the form of these poems, and an example listed on Wikipedia runs in its entirety as follows: "Sir Rider Haggard / Was completely staggered / When his bride-to-be / Announced 'I AM SHE!'" For 10 points, name this genre of "whimsical, four-line biographical poems," which, according to Wikipedia, was invented by a fellow named E. C. Bentley.

ANSWER: clerihew

Description acceptable. The release of these figures occurs after the extinction of such species as the sterile dragons and mountain-dwelling kobolds. The relocation of the "pert retinue from the magician's house" precedes destruction wrought by these beings. Operating "without remorse," these entities are said to have "struck down the sons who strayed into their course, and ravished the daughters, and drove the fathers mad." For 10 points, name these mysterious creatures which appear near the end of a verse which opens, "so an age ended, and its last deliverer died."

ANSWER: the vanished powers from the tenth stanza of *In Time of War / Sonnets From China*

This character fantasizes about dancing with the Vicar of Saint Aloysius, although that dream soon turns into a nightmare involving her being chased by a bull. This character begs God to "Lead me not into temptation / But make me a good girl, please." God pretty much disregards that prayer and instead gives this character cancer. After going to the hospital, this character's cadaver is used to educate some medical students, including a "couple of Oxford Groupers" who dissect this character's knee. For 10 points, name this unmarried woman who lives "in Clevedon Terrace / At number 83."

ANSWER: Miss Edith Gee

In an analogy, this god is characterized as "the prig Prince Hal" who forever feuds with "Falstaff the fool." Supporters of this god include existentialists who "declare / That they are in complete despair, / Yet go on writing." A shield bearing the slogan "Mens Sana Qui Mal Y Pense" is carried by this god. "White Aphrodite" aids the resistance to this god's rule, after this god uses "simulated fire" to create "official art." Opponents to this god follow a new Decalogue that contains commandments like "Thou shalt not be on friendly terms / With guys in advertising firms." For 10 points, name this Greek god mentioned in W. H. Auden's "Under Which Lyre," who famously had his cattle stolen by Hermes.

ANSWER: Apollo