



Juvenilia: Poems, 1922-1928 (W.H. Auden: Critical Editions)

W. H. Auden

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You know the terror that for poets lurks
Beyond the ferry when to Minos brought.
Poets must utter their Collected Works,
Including Juvenilia. . .
--from "Letter to Lord Byron" (1936)

Regardless of how poets feel about their youthful attempts at verse, their early poems not only enrich our understanding of their artistic growth, but also reveal much about the nature of literary genius. No other twentieth-century poet has left behind such a wealth of early poetry as did W. H. Auden. By bringing together for the first time all the poems written by Auden between the ages of fifteen and twenty-one (1922-1928), this book allows us a rare, detailed look at the literary personality, development, and preoccupations of a major poet. Auden's readers will be fascinated to find in these poems the earliest evidence of his interest in psychoanalysis, his conflicted attitude toward his homosexuality, his self-conscious approach to poetry, and his life-long journey toward a religious sense of the world.

This collection includes over two hundred poems, most of them never published before, concluding with the contents of Auden's privately printed volume, *Poems* (1928). The poems are generously annotated with information on Auden's education, reading, literary concerns, and personal life. In her introduction, Katherine Bucknell traces important themes relating to the poet's entire career, and describes crucial but hitherto unknown aspects of his youth during his years at Gresham's School and at Christ Church, Oxford. Throughout this work we see in Auden an admirable instinct for experiment, a thorough testing of tradition, and a gathering mastery of technique and thematic argument.

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