

The
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Stopping the Clocks

It would be agreeable to report the discovery of the source for one of Auden's most famous lines—"Stop all the clocks"—but, for the moment, I can only report almost having found such a source, and in the process having discovered a certain amount about the intellectual life of Auden's father, George Augustus Auden, especially about studies of the "Old North" which would have been available to influence the early poetry of his son.

On reflection, the phrase "Stop all the clocks" is the element which doesn't quite fit the litany of silencings which make up the first verse of Auden's celebrated poem, verses which first appeared as a hallucinatory mock-dirge in the last act of *The Ascent of F6*. All the other injunctions in the verse—to silence pianos, telephone and dog to give place to the funereal drumbeats—are about sound, but stopping the clock is only partly about silencing ticking and striking. Cutting off the telephone is to cut off communication with the living, but the resonances of stopping the clock on a death go further than the immediate metaphorical equivalence of stopping the ticking pendulum and the heart stopping.

Throughout northern Europe and in parts of North America, mostly in rural communities, the physical action of stopping the clock is an essential part of the customs which were observed immediately upon a death, to ensure the release and passage of the soul. This custom would appear to have had a very wide currency. It is hard to believe that this aspect of "stopping the clock" would not have been present in Auden's mind, given the interest in English popular tradition which soon found expression in *The Oxford Book of Light Verse*. If we are aware of Auden's family interest in the literature, artefacts and folklore of old Scandinavia, the possibilities are widened.

A classic survey of Scandinavian folk-customs on a death was published a decade after Auden's verses were composed, although it makes (unfortunately inaccurate) reference to material apparently published in Norwegian in 1934. There is, by the way, no doubt of Auden's father's ability to read Norwegian, or of his interest in such matters. This survey, *The Dead and the Living*, by Reidar Th. Christiansen, was published at Oslo in 1946, as no. 2 of the *Studia Norvegica* series. His quotation (on p. 18) of the litany of customs to be observed on a death reads, intriguingly, almost like an echo of Auden's famous verses: "Make haste, open the window and the door, stop the clock, let the soul pass away."

He introduces the quotation with the words, "and from Balestrand someone is quoted." His footnote reference directs the reader to a whole series of sources on which he has drawn, including "the Balestrandsboka, p. 93". But this reference proves a false lead: indeed there is a list of customs to be observed at the moment of a death in a house on page 93 of the book *Balestrand, Bygd og Ætter*, compiled by Jon Laberg and published at Bergen in 1934, but it is a list of different observances in which clocks are not mentioned at all. In short, Christiansen must have been quoting from memory, and his memory referred perhaps to his own fieldwork or to material which he had seen in manuscript, rather than to the published version.

There is, however, another route by which Auden could have come across the idea of stopping the clocks on a death (although it is also possibly that he had come across a custom which was still observed in the 1930s in rural England in the course of one of his family's north-country holidays.) This was in the publications of a scholarly society of which the poet's father was an active member. In Vol. III of the *Saga Book of the Viking Club*, privately published at London (n.d.), reporting activities from 1901-1903, an article, "The Vikings: Traces of the their Folklore in Marshland", by the Rev. R. M. Heanley contains an extended discussion of customs observed in Lincolnshire at the moment of a death. The observances which he cites are familiar ones: the covering of looking-glasses, the opening of a window to allow the soul free passage. But he writes also of stopping the clock: "The old grandfather clock must be stopped and veiled, to show that he has done with time, and the passing-bell must be rung with all speed."

There, for the moment, the question of the stopped clocks must rest, but the possible influences on the young Auden of these volumes of "northern research" is well worth a little further investigation. Auden's father's interest in Scandinavian studies and particularly in studies of the "old North" of the Vikings and of the Icelandic Sagas was serious and scholarly. From 1904, George Auden was a member, (and Hon. District Secretary for York) of "The Viking Club, or Society for Northern Research" and both received, and contributed to, the (sporadically) annual *Saga-Books* which it published. His interests went far wider and deeper than the possible Icelandic origins of the name "Auden", a subject on which, incidentally, he corresponded with William Morris's Icelandic friend Eiríkur Magnússon. We can be certain that the Viking Club publications would have been in the Auden home throughout the poet's childhood and adolescence

and would have contributed to the loading of his "little brain" with "Northern Myth" to which he refers in part four of the "Letter to Lord Byron" (*The English Auden*, p. 191).

The nature and function of the Viking Club has been comprehensively discussed by Professor Andrew Wawn in his splendid monograph, *The Vikings and the Victorians* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000) especially pp. 308-9 and 335-41, and the depth of Auden senior's interest and competence is also documented by Sveinn Haraldsson in his article "'The North Begins Inside': Auden, Ancestry and Iceland", in *Northern Antiquity: The Post-Mediaeval Reception of Saga and Edda*, (Enfield Lock, 1994, pp. 255-84) also edited by Professor Wawn. George Auden was an active district secretary and contributed notes on several aspects of the Viking past of York and Yorkshire. (His contributions to the Saga Books may be found in volumes V (London, 1906-7), 1906, pp. 53-9, and 1907, pp. 247-50; VI (London, 1908-9), pp. 169-79.) He lectured in York on Viking sculpture (IV, p. 408) he published a handbook to York and District (V, p. 18); commented on belief in "lucky bones" in Whitby (V, p. 178) and on a Viking ship in the ironwork on a church door (V, p. 247). All of this combines with Auden's own recollections of learning northern myths to suggest that arrival of the Saga Books was something of an event in the Auden household.

In essence, the Viking Club was progressive, tracing its origins to the kind of interest in the "old North" which had been expressed by William Morris in his Icelandic travel books and translations. For Morris and those who followed him, the essential attribute of the Iceland of the Sagas was that it was a democracy, with a proto-parliament meeting at Thingvellir, a place which was "holy ground" to Morris and those who came after him. This background helps to round out our apprehension not only of the attitudes which inform Auden's *Letters from Iceland* but the very processes by which he arrived at his precocious poetic individuality.

There is much in these miscellaneous volumes which shadows the preoccupations of the first decade of Auden's maturity as a writer. In a brief note such as this, it is only possible to point to possibilities which others might like to explore in more detail.

Vol. IV, p. 388, has a fine alliterative translation of a passage from *Beowulf* by J. Wright Duff in the course of his article on "Beowulf and Homer," very close in diction to parts of "Paid on Both Sides." Vol. X, 1928-29 has a paper, read in 1923 by George Ainslie Hight, on "Psychology in the Icelandic Sagas" focusing very much on mothers as the

custodians of feuds and grievances, which will become the main-spring of the dramatic development of "Paid on Both Sides."

In Vol. VI, immediately following George Auden's paper on "Antiquities of York" there is (pp. 180-208) an essay on "The Custom of 'Suttee'" in Norway by Dr Haakon Schetelig which has a mention (expanded in a footnote) of Viking blood brothers (perhaps foster brothers) being buried together. This may have caught the imagination of the future poet of "Paid on Both Sides" with its homosocial oaths and allegiances. "From the same time are known a number of instances where two men have been buried together in one grave" A footnote refers to "foster-brothers in the Sagas and to "two men's graves in the Viking age", especially one where the bodies are "laid beside each other and completely analogous as to equipment".

But it is in Vol. I (pp. 182-196) that there is a piece which is a deeper clue to early Auden—I would be surprised if the young Auden had not been fascinated by it. This is a substantial article on "The Vikings in the Lake District" by W. G. Collingwood. It traces evidences for the Vikings in Cumbria (mostly from archeological and placename evidence, since there is little written record). He advances the theory that a stepped mound at Fellfoot, Little Langdale in Cumbria was nothing other than the parliament-place or "Thing-mound" of the Vikings of Cumbria, not far from where the Auden family had their holiday cottage: the mapping of Icelandic presence onto the familiar landscape of northernmost England is underlined by Collingwood's use of modern place-names when he describes "the travels of the Danes between their two capitals"—"by Man to Ellenborough (Maryport)...and through Cumbria over Stainmoor."

This confluence of past and present in Collingwood's article, which places the world of the sagas in the familiar Cumbrian landscape, offers an exciting possible source for that combination of old Icelandic plot and diction with modern northern English places which marks Auden's sudden emergence into originality as the poet of Paid on Both Sides.

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Gresham's Poems: John Hayward and W. H. Auden

The scholarly and precocious John Hayward must have been an obvious choice to edit *The Gresham*, the school magazine of Gresham's School, Holt, in Norfolk. Later to become a well-known man of letters, friend and flatmate of T. S. Eliot and the editor of *The Penguin Book of English Verse*, he took over as editor in his final year at school in October 1921. Hayward used his editorial of February 25th 1922 in *The Gresham* to appeal for some more poetry. "The Editor is never inundated with manuscripts, but we hope that the near future will produce a much larger mass of matter sent in to *The Gresham* for publication.... from our point of view the school is sadly lacking in budding poets," he wrote—ironically enough since the young W. H. Auden had just come to Gresham's.

Robert Medley had arrived at Gresham's in 1919, a year after John Hayward. In the 1920s and 1930s he became well known as a painter and designer for the Group Theatre. He first got to know the young Auden when they went together in March 1922 on one of the school Sociological Society's outings to visit a boot and shoe factory and the Great Eastern Railway works in Norwich. On the Sunday following the expedition (26th March) the two boys took a walk and Medley asked Auden whether he wrote poetry, "confessing by way of exchange that I did. I was a little surprised that he had not tried and suggested he might do so". This was the decisive moment, as Auden was to record later in his "Letter to Lord Byron":

Kicking a little stone he turned to me
And said, "Do you write poetry?"
I never had, and said so, but I knew
That very moment what I wished to do.

As an immediate result of this conversation Auden began to write, and very soon afterwards Hayward was publishing the verse of "this precocious puffy little boy with colourless hair" in the pages of *The Gresham*.

In *The Gresham* of April 8th 1922 appeared an unsigned poem entitled "A Moment": "This appears to be Auden's first published poem" argues Katherine Bucknell in her indispensable *Juvenilia* :

Behold the sky
That once was one great glowing sapphire

Begins to die,
And now is but a glinting opal fire,
Smould'ring to a faded scarlet
O'er the embers of the sunset.

And lo, a soft gossamer-like cloud,
That round the crescent moon, enveils
Its vap'rous shroud,
And passing on its way, reveals
Her, trembling, silvery, rainbow-clad
Silent, frailly sad.

Beneath the poem Hayward appended the note "(We publish this in spite of technical errors. Considering the age of the author it shows great promise - Ed)". Auden was just fifteen at the time and all the circumstantial evidence points to this being his first published poem. Auden must have written the poem almost immediately after his talk with Medley - and Hayward must have seen it very early for him to get it published by the 8th. Hayward's comment showed that with his usual acuity he had picked out the originality of the young Auden's talent beneath the conventional poetic diction - the difference, for example, between the rather clichéd opening to the poem and its much more daring and original ending.

Later, in the 16 December 1922 issue of *The Gresham*, the last edition that he edited before leaving school, Hayward published two, or probably three, other unsigned Auden poems. "Dawn" is included in Katherine Bucknell's edition of Auden's *Juvenilia* and shows his early poetic style:

Far into the vast the mists grow dim,
A deep and holy silence broods around,
Fire burns beyond the vapourous rim,
And crystal-like the dew bestrews the ground.

The last laggard star has fled the glowing sky,
Comes a quiet stirring and a gentle light,
A vast pulsating music, throbbing harmony,
Behold the sun delivered from the gloom of night!

Katherine Bucknell noted that in addition there was a lost poem called "Sunset from Primrose Hill" which was contemporary with "Dawn". It was published in an amateur literary magazine edited by two of Auden's friends at Gresham's, James M. Richards and Raymond Rivière, but, she noted, "All copies are now lost" In fact there is strong evidence to suggest that this poem, or a version of it, immediately preceded "Dawn" in the pages of *The Gresham*. It is entitled "Evening and Night on Primrose Hill." As printed in the magazine the two poems formed an obvious pair, with dawn naturally enough following nightfall. Auden used the same pattern of the diptych in the early "Skyreholme Mill: Part one is the Mill "By Day" and Part two "By Night". Further evidence for its being written by Auden is that he knew Primrose Hill when he visited his friend Medley in London. Medley himself is the only other candidate for authorship but, according to his own account, he could not have written the poem. In his autobiography, *Drawn from the Life* he wrote: "By the end of 1922 Wystan's first published poem (unsigned) had appeared under John Hayward's editorship in the school magazine, the *Grasshopper*, while my only contribution was postponed until the following issue and appeared after I left school." So Medley left Gresham's at the end of the Autumn Term of 1922 after the poem had been published. There is some textual evidence too: Auden was prone to repeat rhymes and poetic devices at this, the beginning of his career as a poet. The rhyme still/hill ends "California": ("For this I stopped and stood quite still/Then turned with quick steps down that hill.") It also ends "Woods in Rain" which was published in 1923 but "was almost certainly written well before this." ("The rain has gone beyond the hill,/But leaves are talking of it still.") And he was especially fond of ending his poems in a pool of moonlight: in "California" the poet fears meeting the full moons stare; "Autumn" has a vision of "the face of Lady Moon" ; in "A Moment" the moon is "silent, frailly sad", and "Skyeholme Mill" ends with a view of the moon ploughing "through cloudy seas and stormy bars".

"Evening and Night on Primrose Hill" is printed here for the first time since it appeared in *The Gresham*. The poem is in two stanzas:

Splendid to be on Primrose Hill
At evening when the world is still!
And City men, in bowler hats, return now day is done,
Rejoicing in the embers of the sun.

The City men they come, they go,
Some quick, some slow.
Then silence; the twinkling lights are lit upon the hill,
The moon stands over Primrose Hill.

On an earlier page of the same issue, there is another unsigned poem which Hayward chose. It is called "Enchanted". No other copy of the poem is known and it cannot at present be proved that Auden wrote it, but it does seem to bear many of the hallmarks of the young Auden - the interest in folklore, the debt to Walter de la Mare's poems on magic, changelings and fairies, and a romantic sense of nature.

Here shall be adventure yet
When the night smells of the clean
Mint in the ditches sweet,
And the summer moon has set
In an aisle of elm trees green.

I shall ride abroad until
Some rare warbler in the keep
Of an enchanted pool
Shrills the darkness of the still
Waters where the willows weep,

Merlin shall entice thy feet
Thither when the midnight passes
Through the silent hills,
And the wind sighs to the fleet
Fairy hosts swaying in the grasses.

I will be to thee a shield
Through the high woods and the brake
Which horror lurketh in,
Where a dragon lies concealed
In the sedges of the lake.

With the first of lively: things,
When the blackbird and the breeze
Together call the day,

Come the light delightful wings
Of the morning through the trees.

I shall simply say "Good-bye,"
See thee wave a sunlit hand,
Nor turn again, for we
Meet so often, thou and I,
On the edge of fairy-land.

Although this poem sounds most unlike the mature Auden a cursory glance at Katherine Bucknell's edition of Auden's *Juvenilia* will show how much he was influenced by the style and subject matter of Walter de la Mare. There is however not nearly enough evidence to prove that Auden wrote "Enchanted". The authorship of the poem remains a tantalising question.

Auden remained at Gresham's School after Hayward left in 1922. Poems appeared in the magazine less frequently after his editorship, but it would be surprising if the young Auden who wrote prolifically and had a poem published in *Public School Verse* in 1924 did not continue to write for his school magazine. In July 28 1923 *The Gresham* printed another unsigned poem entitled "To a Tramp met in the Holidays in Monmouthshire."

Friend I know not who you are
Who talked with me but yesterday
"Each Spring," you said, from far
Hither I come to make my way;
That I along the roads may see
The Apple and the Cherry tree."
I watched you climb the hill,
And then - the beauty of your words
Flashed sudden on my frightened soul,
And made it very still.

The Auden family spent some holidays in Monmouth; it was a natural holiday spot for a family based in Birmingham and one of Auden's aunts lived there. In fact he was so regular a visitor to Monmouth that he became a "boat boy" at the Anglican church there. Few of Auden's fellow pupils at Gresham's—the most easterly public school in England—would have known or visited that area of England. But it is not just the geography of the poem that points to

Auden. The two most obvious influences on the style of poem are the A. E. Housman of *The Shropshire Lad* and Wordsworth – both key poets for Auden at this time in his career, as Katherine Bucknell shows so well in her edition of the *Juvenilia*. The poem starts with Housman’s pastoral lanes draped with cherry and apple blossom and is based on the kind of meetings with countrymen that Wordsworth wrote about in *Lyrical Ballads* and “Resolution and Independence”. The last line is indeed close to the bathos some of the *Lyrical Ballads*. There is one final small but crucial piece of evidence – the presence of Auden’s favoured rhyme “hill” / “still”. Taken together these factors suggest that it is overwhelmingly likely that “To a Tramp met in Monmouthshire” – together with “Evening and Night on Primrose Hill” – are by Auden. And I have a strong hunch that there may be others which lie hidden in the pages of *The Gresham*....

JOHN SMART

John Smart, Head of Arts at Gresham's School, is finishing Tarantula's Web: John Hayward, T.S. Eliot, and Their Circle. He recently won the New Writing Ventures Prize for Non-Fiction.

A Revised Census of Auden’s Poems (1928)

Note: This a revised version of an item that appeared in the previous issue.

Auden’s first book, *Poems*, was privately printed by Stephen Spender during the long vacation from Oxford in 1928 in an edition described on its colophon (the verso of the page containing the dedication “To Christopher Isherwood”) as comprising “About 45 copies.” This number seems to have been optimistic. Perhaps thirty copies were completed; eighteen copies are known to exist; at least twelve are presumed to be lost.

Spender printed the front matter and the first 22 pages of text on a hand-press at his home in Frogna, Hampstead. When the hand-press broke down, he hired the Holywell Press in Oxford to complete the job by printing the remaining pages of text (23 through 37) and an erratum slip containing a section of a poem omitted from the earlier part of the book, and then binding the book in its brick-orange paper wrappers. He asked the press to prepare the forty-five copies indicated on the colophon, but the press discarded some of his own hand-

printed work (evidently it was too amateurishly printed to use) and bound up only thirty. The press also printed an erratum leaf with part of a poem omitted from the earlier pages.

Auden supplied Spender with much of the manuscript of the book; some seems to have been obtained from A.S.T. Fisher, a student at Oxford with whom Auden had been friendly during his first year at the university and who retained copies of Auden's earlier poems. Some of the copy was sold (presumably by Auden) to the American collector Caroline Newton, and is now in the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library. Spender apparently began printing the book in September 1928 and the Holywell Press finished the job apparently in October.

Spender sent copies to Auden in Berlin. In an undated letter, probably around November 1928, Auden wrote to Spender, apparently in reference to the many typographical errors, "Please don't think I was cross with you about the books. It was jolly nice of you to do it at all and I know what my script is like" (Berg Collection). Auden and Spender separately (later, sometimes together) gave copies to their friends and relations, and the roster of the known copies provides a glimpse of their circle of acquaintances in early adulthood. The following census of copies is based partly on information in B. C. Bloomfield and Edward Mendelson's *W. H. Auden: A Bibliography* (University Press of Virginia, 1973), partly on Katherine Bucknell's edition of Auden's *Juvenilia* (Princeton University Press, 1994), and partly on more recent information.

Most surviving copies include a number written in Spender's hand beneath the "About 45 copies" statement of limitation; a few do not, and may have been given away after the first batch of copies was distributed. All known owners are listed in chronological order, separated by semi-colons; the name or approximate location of the owners of copies 4 and "24—*About*" are known but have been kept private; the owners of copies 10 and 12 are entirely unknown. The absence of the erratum leaf is noted where it is known, but the erratum leaf may or may not be present in other copies; further information will be gratefully received. Details of Auden's and Spender's inscriptions are noted in some but not all instances, and further information on these matters will also be gratefully received.

Numbered copies (thirteen are known to exist; the copies with the twelve numbers missing from the sequence below are presumably lost):

- 2 Christopher Isherwood; Don Bachardy; sold by him to the Huntington Library. The inscription reads: "To Christopher with love from the Author 'Dura virum nutrix'" ["stern nurse of men," the motto of Sedbergh School, which had a special place in Auden's private mythology because his Oxford friend Gabriel Carritt had been a pupil there].
- 4 Cecil Day-Lewis; H. Bradley Martin (American collector); sold at Sotheby's, 30 April 1990; James O. Edwards (American collector); sold by him around 2003 to Gekoski (London bookseller); sold to a private American collector. The inscription reads: "To [Rex *deleted*] Cecil | With love from | the Author. | 'Dangerous: does set | Dancing blood.'" [The deleted dedication was presumably to Rex Warner; the verses are from Gerard Manley Hopkins, "To what serves mortal beauty?"]
- 9 Edward Upward; sold by him to the British Library.
- 10 First inscribed by Auden to an illegible deleted name, perhaps something resembling John or Luke Turlédren, then inscribed by Auden to D. Van Lennep (otherwise unknown; perhaps the Dutchman called Dan in Auden's 1929 Berlin journal?); perhaps retrieved by Auden, or never given to Van Lennep, and given by him to John Hayward; Anthony Hobson (English collector); sold at Sotheby's, 28 June 1996; present location unknown. The inscriptions read: "To D. van Lennep | with love from | the Author | Nov 1929 | John Hayward | with love | from | Wystan Auden | 'Permanendo Vincimus' | 'Who sweeps a room as for thy laws | Makes that and the action fine'" [The nonsensical Latin tag, perhaps intended to mean something like "By persistence we conquer," may have been an in-joke among pupils at Gresham's School, as it also occurs in a letter from Auden to Benjamin Britten, who like Auden and Hayward was an ex-Greshamian; the English verses are by George Herbert].
- 11 Archibald Campbell (a friend of Auden and Spender at Oxford); bequeathed by him to Edinburgh University Library.
- 12 Inscribed by Spender, "Winifred [Paine] from S.H.S." (Winifred Paine was the Spender family housekeeper, with whom Spender had a close relationship), and by Auden "With love also from the Author." Later inscribed by Auden "and with love [?now] to John Johnson from Wystan Auden" (Johnson was a young writer associated with the Group Theatre in the 1930s, later a literary agent);

- sold at Phillips', 16 March 1995; Roger Rechler (American collector); sold at Christie's New York, 11 October 2002; present owner unknown. Lacks the erratum leaf. *Reproduced in a "copyflo" xerographic facsimile edition first made available by University Microfilms in 1960; still available from Proquest.*
- 15 E. R. Dodds (perhaps given to him during a visit from Auden to his parents' home in Birmingham where Dodds was a family friend); bequeathed by him to the Bodleian Library.
- 16 John Layard; sold at Sotheby Parke Bernet, 15 December 1982; Carter Burden (American collector); sold by him to Joseph the Provider (California bookseller); sold in 1983 to Raymond Danowski; given by him in 2004 to Emory University Library. Uninscribed. (A report on the Emory University Library collection in the *New York Times*, 29 September 2004, mistakenly identifies an inscription in a copy of *Poems* (1930) as the inscription in this copy.)
- 17 Uninscribed copy perhaps given by Spender to Winifred Paine's mother (see notes on copy 12), whose name was either Mary E. or Helen Paine; sold by Spender on her behalf in the 1950s to the University of Cincinnati Library. Lacks the erratum leaf (although the contents of the leaf are reproduced in Spender's hand). *Reproduced in a facsimile edition published by the Elliston Poetry Foundation in 1964, with a prefatory note by Spender.*
- 18 Gabriel Carritt (close friend of Auden and Spender at Oxford); Sidney Newman (organ scholar at Oxford and close friend of Auden); Berg Collection, New York Public Library.
- 19 Gabriel Carritt; Houghton Library, Harvard.
- 24 S[heilah] H. Richardson 26.2.29 [her dating of the copy given to her by Auden in Birmingham around the time he broke off their engagement]; given by her to Dr. H. M. Trudgian (lecturer in French at Durham); Durham University Library. Signed by her, but uninscribed. *Reproduced in a facsimile edition for the Ilkley Literature Festival, 1973, with a separate booklet containing a foreword by B. C. Bloomfield.*
- 24—*About* David Ayerst (a friend of Auden and Spender at Oxford); Glenn Horowitz (New York bookseller); sold by him in the 1990s to a private American collector. The approximation in the numbering suggests that this was either the last or one of the last copies to be numbered. Inscribed by Spender: "This valuable work to David Ayerst from Stephen Spender, the printer. But if he has a true regard for the future at Christie's, he will also get the author's

signature. Feb 1st 1929." Inscribed below this by Auden: "To David with love and best wishes Wystan Auden".

Unnumbered copies (five are known to exist; the italicized letters are arbitrarily assigned for convenience):

- [a] Inscribed by Auden to Spender; then by both Auden and Spender to Cyril Connolly; University of Tulsa. The earlier inscription reads: "From the young author to the younger printer, with youthful love, Wystan Auden October 1929." The later one reads (in Auden's hand except for "and Stephen"): "Dear Cyril, | We thought you might like this | Wystan | and Stephen | We worship truth for we are true | beauty for we are fair | And goodness loves both me and you | For we have lovely hair". In the early 1950s Auden convinced Spender to give this copy to Connolly at a lunch date later the same day; Auden promised to replace the copy with the copy that belonged to Auden's father (but see the note to copy [w] below). Lacks the erratum leaf.
- [b] William Plomer; Jack Samuels (American collector); Columbia University Library. Uninscribed; no markings or corrections. Lacks the erratum leaf.
- [c] George Rylands; given by him in 1974 to the Library of King's College, Cambridge (catalogued in the Modern Archives as "Misc. 25"). The inscription reads: "For George Rylands With best wishes from The Printer, Stephen Spender. June 9th 1930." Lacks the erratum leaf.
- [d] Martin D'Arcy; Mabel Zahn (Philadelphia bookseller); sold at Sotheby Parke-Bernet, 20 February 1973; Pierpont Morgan Library. Inscribed by Spender to Father [Martin] D'Arcy and by Auden to Mabel Zahn.
- [e] Uninscribed; sold at Christie's, 4 April 1974; House of Books (New York bookseller); Indiana University Library.

Lost copies (copies that are known to have existed but of which no trace can now be found; Rex Warner may also have had a copy that has not been traced); these are listed in alphabetical order of their first known owners:

- [u] George Augustus Auden, Auden's father. Auden promised to retrieve this copy and give it to Spender after his father's death,

but nothing more was ever said about it, and the copy has disappeared.

- [v] E. H. Jacob, about whom nothing seems to be known except that he received a copy of the book (he was perhaps the Professor E. H. Jacob who was the father of E. F. Jacob, tutor in medieval history at Christ Church, Oxford, when Auden was there).
- [w] Louis MacNeice. A typed transcription of this copy was made in the 1930s by Ruthven Todd, who did not note the existence of any inscription or number. Auden probably gave this copy to MacNeice when they became friendly in Birmingham in the mid-1930s.
- [x] Bertha Mills, the live-in cook of Harold Spender's family. Lady Spender recalls that she had a copy, possibly sold near the end of her life when she married the Spenders's manservant Captain DeVoto; possibly the same as copy [e].
- [y] A. L. Rowse, who was told by Auden or Spender that the book was sold by subscription, and who seems to have been the only original recipient who paid for his copy. Rowse lent it to an unidentified friend, and it disappeared during World War II.
- [z] Peter Watson, publisher of *Horizon*. Lady Spender recalls that this copy was sold by Watson's friend Normal Fowler, or by Watson's estate; this too could conceivably be the same as copy [e].

It is conceivable that any one of these lost copies (except the one that belonged to Auden's father) could be the same as the surviving copy listed as unnumbered copy [e].

Further information about any of these copies, or about other copies that have not come to the compiler's attention, will be gratefully received and noted in future issues of the *Newsletter*.

E. M.

Meeting Auden: First Encounters and Initial Impressions (Part II)

Harold Norse, poet: "Miss Mess!"

Chester [Kallman]...said, "Did you know that Auden and Isherwood are reading on West Fifty-second Street next week?" He grinned

impishly. "Let's sit in the front row and wink at them!" And that's precisely what we were about to do.

Our first impressions of Auden, slovenly in rumpled tweed, were of disbelief. His shirt was unpressed, heavy woollen socks bunched limply around his thick ankles, and untied shoelaces flopped over his shoes. "Miss Mess!" hissed Chester. ...

Auden's brisk Oxford-Yorkshire monotone was difficult to understand. With his sloppy clothes and awkward movements (not to mention his swift birdlike nods of the head) he was the star, the gauche comedian, the mad genius. He stole the show. Overcome by the situation, we stifled giggles and continued to flirt outrageously with Isherwood, winking and grinning, and he grinned back. We didn't know that Auden, who was nearsighted, never saw us. . .

At the end of the reading we rushed backstage, where some students and other admirers were crowding around the writers in a cramped space. We stared at Auden, whose attention we wished to attract, but he was engaged in conversation. Isherwood kept glancing at us while talking to someone else. Finally when Auden had a free moment Chester told him we were from the Brooklyn College Observer (I had graduated the previous semester) and wished to interview him and Isherwood. In a brusque offhand manner Auden sort of trumpeted, "Oh, ah, see Mr. Isherwood!" and turned unconcernedly to another admirer who claimed his attention. ... (New York, 1939)

Memoirs of a Bastard Angel: A Fifty-Year Literary and Erotic Odyssey
(Morrow, 1989)

Paul Bowles, novelist and composer: In awe

That winter I went several times to see Auden, who lived only a block or so from me in Brooklyn Heights. I was considerably in awe of him. His learning and the strange way in which he expressed himself when he spoke combined to make me always unsure of the meaning of his words. But that in itself was a pleasant, if losing, game. (early 1940s)

Without Stopping (Hamish Hamilton, 1972)

Ben Bradlee, newspaper editor (Washington Post): Seldom bathed

Intellectually, the school's [St. Marks School's] most exciting presence (for one term) was the great British poet Wystan Hugh Auden, who was a friend of our English teacher, Richard "Dreamy Dick" Eberhart. My memories of Auden are two: he had a really large mole on his lower left cheek, and he didn't bathe often enough. No recollection of his poetry, nor any recollection of being embarrassed by having no recollection of his poetry. (Boston, 1935)

A Good Life: Newspapering and Other Adventures
(Simon & Schuster, 1995)

Anne Morrow Lindbergh, wife of transAtlantic aviator Charles Lindbergh: No dross

I should like...to write about Auden, who came out [from New York] one afternoon. I shall not see any more Audens for a long time so I should like to describe him.

He is pure...and good, and clear. He is, I think, perhaps the most unworldly person I have ever met. There is no dross about him – or very little. He is loose from the world and alone, suspended in space, and yet intuitively at the heart of its trouble.

Intellectually I am not educated enough to talk to him and emotionally I am too disturbed [by the war]. I wanted to be completely honest with him – pure myself – but I cannot be, not at this moment, because I am confused and too tied to concrete problems.

I felt frustrated and humble and felt I had nothing to give him. (Englewood, N.J., 1940)

War Within and Without: Diaries and Letters 1939-1944
(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980)

Nicolas Nabokov, composer: A maker, not a dreamer

Wystan Auden slid into my life thunderlessly in the late autumn or winter of 1943. I met him through Isaiah Berlin, in Washington.

He had a handsome, very Anglo-Attic profile. It was a noble profile, almost classical, its parts in measured proportion to each other. The large ear shell, the gently curved arch of the brow and of the nostrils, the willful, ample chin, and the broad forehead half

concealed by unruly, shot-trimmed hair—all of it a coherent, harmonious whole. But what gave life and identity to that whole were minor traits which at a cursory glance went unnoticed. A pouting protruding upper lip that failed to cover a fleshier, sensuous lower one. Two wrinkles. A long one descended in a wave from the edge of one nostril all the way down to the chin. The second, much shorter and straight, was tangent to the mouth's corner. But if one looked more closely at those wrinkles, they said something more—something about compassion and grief, about anger and irony, and about a strange kind of lassitude. And then there were those eyes of his. They did not see, they reflected. They seemed turned inward, concerned with something that was going on in that person's own self. Maybe remembering. Or maybe helping the mind's eye to tend to the game of training words and sentences, finding the clearer, the most articulate way of stating a thought, expressing a feeling, describing a landscape, a face, an object. . . .

This was not a dreamer but a maker, and the maker's mind was keen, his wit sharp, his senses aglow. . . .

I still hear through memory's wilderness the first sounds of Wystan's nasal, noisy voice, his clumsy laughter, his assertive way of telling not quite exportable (English parsonage) jokes, and can recapture my astonishment at seeing the dirt of his fingernails, his sartorial neglect (in childhood Russia I imagined all Englishmen as romantic but elegant Lord Byrons or Beau Brummells)—but also being startled by his quick mind, his staggering erudition, the ebullient sense of humor, and his dogmatically funny prejudices.

Bagázh: Memoirs of a Russian Cosmopolitan (Atheneum, 1975)

A. J. Ayer, philosopher: Guilt in America

I did not see enough of Auden for us to become friends but I liked him better than I did subsequently when he became a respectable Anglican and disavowed the radicalism of much of his early work. His motive for settling in America had been personal, rather than the simple desire to escape the war, which some of his detractors attributed to him. This did not prevent him from having some sense of guilt, which had the effect of making him more defiantly American. Though Auden himself lived modestly, the contrast between the plenty available to us in America and the privations of wartime England made it easy to feel guilty even for those of us

whose presence in America was supposed to be contributing to the prosecution of the war. (New York, mid-1940s)

The Memoirs of a Philosopher (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977)

Allen Ginsberg, poet: No seduction

We first met at Earl Hall, Columbia University, 1945, when he read to students. I accompanied him on the subway to Sheridan Square, wondering if he'd invite me to his Cornelia Street apartment and seduce me. He didn't. ...

I had a couple of funny run-ins with him different times, and always had a very uneasy time with him, I always felt like a fool, trying to lay a trip on him culture-political or otherwise. Once we had a big happy agreement about marijuana should be legalized. He said "Liquor is much worse, quite right quite right. I do think...end all this fuss." (New York)

Deliberate Prose: Selected Essays 1952-1995 (HarperCollins, 2000)

Anatole Broyard, literary critic: Scuttling

Auden lived around the corner on Cornelia Street and I often saw him scurrying along with his arms full of books and papers. He looked like a man running out of a burning building with whatever of his possessions he'd been able to grab. He had a curious scuttling gait, perhaps because he always wore espadrilles. (New York, 1946)

Kafka was the Rage: A Greenwich Village Memoir
(Carol Southern Books, 1993)

Robin Maugham, novelist and dramatist: Humour and charm

One winter I revisited Ischia with Michael Davidson...As Mike tells in his book he had known Wystan Auden as a boy of sixteen—"Tall and gangling, with fair hair limp across a pale forehead and clumsy limbs apt to go adrift; and an old, cogitative face that was frighteningly unboyish." Mike now introduced us to Wystan, who was living in Forio. We walked up a twisting cobbled side-street one afternoon. Wystan Auden opened the door and showed us into his living-room. We sat on deck-chairs beside a gas-stove which was fed by a giant cylinder. Behind us were two modern side-tables littered

with books, letters, documents and ashtrays. I was unprepared for Wystan's heavily lined face and pronounced American accent; I was equally unprepared for his humour and his charm. . . .

I met Wystan quite often that winter. I was fascinated by the mixture of gay hedonist and the strict schoolmaster, between the outrageous rebel and the didactic puritan. He would talk about sex; then suddenly he would check himself: "Sex is a part of life but only a part of it," he would say. "I think people are a bore who can think of nothing but sex." (late 1940s)

Escape from the Shadows (Hodder and Stoughton, 1972)

Harold Acton, novelist and historian: Diffident about his celebrity

Others I met in New York...Auden had become acclimated, but in spite of certain Americanisms, which he pronounced as if they were inverted commas, I considered him a product of cultured Oxford; he was a born teacher as well as a poet, and his research work into word combinations kept him boyish under a premature network of wrinkles. He captured live images in mid-air, entranced by phenomena that irritated Evelyn Waugh—by the crazy slang, the garrulous cab drivers, the jets of steam in the street, receptive to ideas, generous in reading his latest poem aloud, diffident about his celebrity. He had remained true to his poetic self though querulous youngsters might carp at what they called his betrayal of the Marxist attitude. (1950)

More Memoirs of an Aesthete (Hamish Hamilton, 1970)

Compiled by DANA COOK

Dana Cook is a Toronto editor and collector of literary encounters. His compilations have appeared in a wide range of newspapers, magazines and journals. This is the second installment of a continuing series.

Book Reviews

The Cambridge Companion to W. H. Auden, edited by Stan Smith.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. \$65, £45 ; \$23.99,
£15.99 (paperback).

I can still recall my excitement at reading Stan Smith's first book on Auden as a graduate student. Having already armed myself with Edward Mendelson's indispensable *Early Auden*, I saw new possibilities in adapting single-author studies to a post-New Critical climate. Mendelson elucidated the poet's ambiguities and conflicts while revealing his English canon as a coherent and navigable system. Smith deconstructed the poet's language while revealing his consistent use of unstable forms and a decentered "self." Both tendencies shape *The Cambridge Companion to W. H. Auden* so that, along with John Fuller, Smith and Mendelson are the contributors' most cited critics. Through this collection of essays, Smith seeks to bring Auden more fully into the postmodern scene—an agenda shared by contributors John Boly, Rainer Emig, and Richard Bozorth. At the same time, the Companion also maintains a repertoire of standard texts and approaches; its aim is not so revisionist as that of another Cambridge collection of essays, *Gender, Desire, and Sexuality in T. S. Eliot* (also published in 2004). Whatever their approach, the Companion's contributors are fluent in the diversity of Auden's canon, engaging in the kind of close reading that befits a writer of his caliber.

The Auden canon that emerges here is an intriguing mixture of volumes, genres, and forms. According to the contributors' consensus, *The Orators* is the major early work; "A Summer Night," "On This Island," "A Walk After Dark," and "In Praise of Limestone" the key lyrics; *New Year Letter* the major long poem, "Horae Canonicae" the major poetic sequence. (The latter receives sensitive readings from both Mendelson and Gareth Reeves.) Of Auden's collaborations with Christopher Isherwood, *The Ascent of F6* is the Companion's important play, and *Letters from Iceland* (especially "Letter to Lord Byron") the preferred travelogue. (By contrast, *The Isherwood Century* collection featured *The Dog Beneath the Skin* and *Journey to a War*.) As one would expect, the contributors' choice of prose works comes primarily from *The Enchafed Flood* and *The Dyer's Hand*. But there are some pleasant surprises. Several contributors find renewed value in *About the House*, bucking conventional opinion. Emig's extended analysis of "Ode to Gaea" and Bozorth's use of the Berlin journal extend the standard

canon. Famous lyrics of the 30s that established what Smith terms “the ‘Auden effect’” do make appearances, as they should. But one senses a desire to move beyond the anthologized Auden and flesh out the incomplete image most readers have of him.

As with his first book on Auden, Smith seeks here to move beyond the traditional dividing line of the poet’s “early” and “late” styles. Richard Davenport-Hines finds a “rounded integrity” in Auden’s “Christian antecedents and his Christian end” (15), Peter Porter notes his signature ability to “absorb almost any style but never seem a pasticheur” (127), John Lucas explores his lifelong “curiosity about the nature of power and authority” (152), and Paola Marchetti finds consistencies by charting his cartographies. Many of the *Companion’s* essays call into question the national affiliations that inflect the “early/late” divide, moving beyond conventional formulations of an “English” and “American” Auden. For Smith, the poet’s Americanization “was always a matter of playing at being what he had chosen to become” (8). Patrick Deane argues that Auden displayed a fundamentally ambiguous attitude toward England, and that the country became “a body of ideas, images and linguistic practices” shaping his identity and traveling with him (37). Nicholas Jenkins uses his essay on Auden’s second nationality to question the idea of “nation” itself in assessing a poet’s work, preferring to see him as an “uprooted” figure who fashioned a hybrid style rather than seeking assimilation. Focusing on the poet’s productive time in Italy, Mendelson offers a “European Auden” who becomes a poet of the human body instead of a national one. This cluster of essays works well in a critical climate attuned to, in Smith’s words, “the accelerating logic of globalisation,” although I would hesitate to affiliate Auden with the “‘Third World’” (13).

Despite the *Companion’s* conscious rejection of viewing Auden’s repatriation in dualistic ways, I couldn’t help but notice that the abdication of Edward VIII is mentioned on three separate occasions. Anglo-American relations seem to be a flash point for the volume, revealing parallel anxieties about “giving up” Englishness and becoming Americanized. The *Companion* cannot help but reflect the literary and political tensions of its cultural moment. Two I find especially relevant: Oxford’s surprising choice of an American academic (Keith Tuma) to edit its millennial anthology of modern British (and Irish) poetry, and the increasing imperial reach of the U.S. under George W. Bush (who makes an ominous appearance in Lucas’s essay).

Smith's *Companion* also reflects the great strides that Auden's critics have made in acknowledging the poet's sexuality and its importance to understanding fully his work. As late as the mid 1990s, a press referee claimed that I was "reading homosexuality" into Auden's homoerotic images of coal miners and campy self-portrayals in travelogues. Even now, too many anthology editors soft-pedal his pivotal relationship with Chester Kallman. Admirably, Smith's opening chronology is up-front about the poet's love life, as is the biographical essay by Davenport-Hines. Bozorth's essay extends the pioneering work of Gregory Woods, insisting on both the importance of homosexual desire in the love poetry and its resistance to "easy appropriation as an affirming voice for gay sexuality and identity" (185). Auden's sexuality also inflects other essays from time to time, and this level of biographical-critical integration strengthens the collection.

Like all collections, the *Companion* has its shortcomings. To an American academic of my generation, the volume has strikingly few women contributors (although both Smith and Jenkins note the influence of women writers on Auden). Women do comprise a relatively small proportion of Auden's critics, and Susannah Gottlieb's debut book is too recent for her to have been included here. But the *Companion* would benefit from having Lucy McDiarmid and Katherine Bucknell among its contributors. Several essays allude to Auden's pervasiveness in popular culture (especially in *Four Weddings and a Funeral*), and an extended essay on this topic would be welcome. Ian Sansom does provide some compelling comments on photographs of Auden that have become iconic. Scholarship is rather thin in some of the essays, and in some cases standard arguments outweigh new ones. Yet overall, the composite of traditional and more recent approaches does considerable justice to Auden as a major figure who merits further attention.

In the U.S., the rise of cultural studies has become yet another challenge to the conventional single-author study. Vertically oriented studies of "influence" are giving way to horizontally oriented studies of "intersection." Boly's insightful reading of Auden and New Criticism brings this kind of work into the *Companion*. Gottlieb and Douglas Mao, likely contributors to future collections on Auden, have done innovative work on his intersections with Hannah Arendt and with liberalism, respectively. Given Auden's various networks and affiliations, he may indeed be "a singularly appropriate figure to pre-empt over the beginning of the twenty-first" century, as Smith con-

tends (14). But this will not diminish the importance of his singular voice.

MARSHA BRYANT

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February House, by Sherill Tippins

New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2005, \$24.00

Although we so often encounter houses in literature—Darcy’s Pemberley, Miss Havisham’s Satis House, Gatsby’s mansion—we rarely consider houses of literature: the floorboards that supported, and the walls that listened in on, the crumpled pages and eureka moments of writers through the ages. But Sherill Tippins’s *February House*, a delightful and fascinating account of the artistic explosion inside Brooklyn’s 7 Middagh Street during one year in the middle of the twentieth century, goes a long way toward righting the balance.

During 1940 and 1941, an astonishingly motley crew lived in February House (so nicknamed by Anaïs Nin because many of its residents had been born in this month): W. H. Auden, Paul and Jane Bowles, Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears, Gypsy Rose Lee, and Carson McCullers—“all,” Tippins notes, “under thirty-five but already near the apex of their careers.” Salvador and Gala Dali, Kurt Weill and Lotte Lenya, the entire family of Thomas Mann, and several circus performers and a chimpanzee also passed through. The story of this almost laughably eclectic group will be familiar to readers of Paul Muldoon’s brilliant poem “7, Middagh Street,” but to others it will come as a revelation, offering not only countless facts and insights about each artist’s life and work, but also describing the many friendships, animosities, and creative collisions among them.

Turning the four-story Victorian townhouse into an urban artist’s colony was the brainchild of George Davis, the fiction editor of *Harper’s Bazaar* with an “attraction to the eccentric in culture” who published, along with much else, part of Christopher Isherwood’s *Good-Bye to Berlin* as well as his and Auden’s *Journey to a War*. After seeing the house in a dream, Davis found the real thing in Brooklyn Heights and promptly invited his friend Carson McCullers to live there with him, insisting that they could afford the endeavor by

asking others “who were also, for financial, political, or any other reason, finding it difficult to focus on their work” to join them.

Tippins shrewdly devotes separate sections to Middagh Street’s main inhabitants as, one by one, Wizard of Oz-style, they move in, so that by the time they are all unpacked, we know something about each of them. Her portraits of McCullers—her disarming blend of self-absorption and what Janet Flanner called her “energy of affection”—and stripper-turned-novelist Gypsy Rose Lee are especially vivid. By the winter of 1940, the house “had developed a reputation as the greatest artistic salon of the decade,” with additional status as “a new world, a free zone” for the numerous European émigrés who spent time there. Tippins does a fine job of mingling domestic anecdotes—Davis, waking at noon, crying “Vex not his ghost: O let him pass!” from *King Lear* as he steps naked over a plumber; superstitious Gypsy declaring that “one must eat twelve grapes, one on each of the twelve strokes of midnight, every New Year’s Eve”—with more serious discussions of the household’s members.

Not surprisingly, Auden, who relocated to Middagh Street from his small apartment a few blocks away, quickly becomes the unacknowledged hero of both house and book, cheerfully but firmly itemizing ways to set the place in order: “First, they must agree on a schedule of regular hours for work and for socializing....Second, a list of chores must be created and divided among the residents as best suited their talents and needs....Third, they must find a way to raise money....” Auden also designated himself as rent collector, bill payer, and scheduler of repairs, and soon seemed, Tippins observes, to have created a “viable balance between the closed domestic perfection” of life at his friend Elizabeth Mayer’s house and “the romantic, bohemian chaos that he had discovered on moving in.” Tippins’s lively and multi-faceted portrait of Auden—valiantly bringing order to chaos, imperiously presiding over the “gobble and gossip” of the dinner table, and irritatingly diagnosing his fellow residents’ psychosomatic ailments—alone makes *February House* well worth the price of admission.

But Tippins does much more. She describes how, during this period, Auden produced some of his most important work: the poems “The Dark Years,” “If I Could Tell You,” “In Sickness and in Health,” parts of the book *The Double Man*, and the oratorio “For the Time Being.” She examines his fraught collaboration with Britten on the opera *Paul Bunyan*. She reveals how badly he clashed with the

foppish and irresponsible Paul Bowles but shows, on the brighter side, how his friendship with McCullers led her to infuse her work-in-progress *The Ballad of the Sad Café* with his own thoughts on “achieving salvation through love for another individual.” She recounts how, during his time at Middagh Street, Auden started taking communion at an Episcopal church in the neighborhood. And she is a sympathetic and astute chronicler of how his stay at the house coincided with his increasingly problematic relationship with Chester Kallman.

Although Auden had met Kallman in 1939, it was at Middagh Street that “l'affaire C” – Kallman’s betrayal of Auden with the sailor and recent Oxford graduate Jack Barker – took place, and where Auden, half mad with jealousy one night, tried to strangle his sleeping, faithless and all-too-human lover. If Auden is the book’s unofficial protagonist, Kallman is its indisputable villain: Tippins quotes one letter in which he complains to Auden of pickups “who decide that I’m their dear one, – and have to be dropped discretely before the whole business...becomes too violently tiresome – and God it’s such a bore, bore, bore.” But Tippins drags Kallman through the mud not, I think, to sully his reputation – what reputation? – but rather to show how stubbornly unconditional Auden’s love for him was (and how scarily thin, in this case, the line between love and masochism became).

Although, as the temporary visitor Denis de Rougement claimed, “all that was new in America in music, painting, or choreography emanated from that house, the only center of art and thought that I have found in any large city in the country,” the fervor could not last forever. The lodgers gradually departed – Auden to teach at the University of Michigan – and, after playing host to various other luminaries including the novelist Richard Wright, 7 Middagh Street was torn down in 1945 to make room for the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway.

Tippins’s style – engaging but not coy, brisk but not cursory – makes for a wonderfully entertaining and compelling tale, and her ability to blend compassion for her cast of characters with a more critical perspective on them is nothing short of remarkable. The book’s only weak spots occur when she either travels a little too far into the minds of her subjects (as when, describing Kallman’s reaction to Barker’s departure, she speculates that “Never before, perhaps, had the young man felt so abandoned and isolated. But it was also likely that he had never before felt so alive”) or, very occasionally,

gets her facts wrong (calling, for example, “The Sea and the Mirror” a “prose poem”). But these tiny gripes aside, *February House* is a marvelous book with something for everyone: Auden devotees, students of twentieth-century culture, scholars of New York City, and, perhaps not least, urbanites seeking tips on how to turn their cramped quarters into magical crucibles of truth and beauty.

RACHEL WETSZTEON

Rachel Wetszteon is the author of three books of poems, including the forthcoming Sakura Park (Perse, 2006), as well as Influential Ghosts: A Study Of Auden's Sources (Routledge, 2006). She teaches at William Paterson University and the Unterberg Poetry Center of the Ninety-Second Street Y.

The Library of Edward Upward [bookseller's catalogue], by Charles Cox

London: Maggs Bros. Ltd., 2005. Unpagged; no price.

Charles Cox's catalogue of three hundred twenty items from Edward Upward's library, prepared for London booksellers Maggs Bros Ltd, is a remarkable scholarly achievement in its own right. Scarcily well-informed, it constructs a kind of literary biography by indirect means, one in which the reader can enjoy putting facts together and drawing inferences. It is best to say straight away that on Auden, this collection of books is disappointing. The real interest lies in Upward's own books—there are 78 entries—and in what the books say about the relationship between Upward and Christopher Isherwood. Isherwood is the pervasive presence here; he is even present in what little Auden material there is, which includes the well-known letter accompanying *Poems* in 1930, where Auden writes: 'I shall never know how much in these poems is filched from you via Christopher' (6 October 1930, from Larchfield School). This letter is present only as a photocopy, as is Auden's manuscript of the 1926 'Cinders', now in the British Library with Upward's copy of the 1928 *Poems*. There are no annotations by Upward to the presentation copies of either *Poems* 1930 or to the first edition of *The Orators*, though in his copy of the third edition of the latter (1966), Upward has noted textual variants in the third of the 'Six Odes', the one dedicated to himself. This lack of intervention does not imply a lack of interest; there are twenty-nine

Auden items altogether, including twenty books of poems that Upward presumably acquired himself, and—in an interesting late development where scholars intervene with new texts by friends—the Auden juvenilia and uncollected writings sent to him by the editors, Katherine Bucknell and Nicholas Jenkins. Given his political importance to his contemporaries, it is significant (as Charles Cox shrewdly notes), that Upward does not appear in *Authors Take Sides on the Spanish Civil War*. Was it editorial incompetence, ignorance of who mattered, or a refusal? I doubt if it was the last.

There are thirty-six books here by Isherwood (four of them jointly with Auden), including the specially bound advance proof copy of *All the Conspirators* (1928), and a separate dedication copy. Of the four books owned by Isherwood (dated 1926-28), the most interesting is his copy of Prince D. S. Mirsky's *Contemporary Russian Literature 1881-1925* (published 1926, dated by Isherwood February 1928). On the endpapers is copied out, in a small, fastidious and immaculate hand a translation by Babette Deutsch and Avrahm Yarmolinsky of Ilya Ehrenburg's long poem 'The Sons of our Sons' which begins: 'The sons of our sons will marvel, / Paging the text-book: / "1914. . . 1917. . . 1919. . . How did they live? The poor devils!'"'. The poem ends with revolutionaries taken out to be shot: 'We loved, we destroyed, we lived—in the hour of our death'. Isherwood's engagement with emotional revolutionary uplift of this kind was firmly suppressed when in the 1930s he chose to look on the world with detachment, as if he were a camera.

Not all Upward's friendships persisted so strongly as that with Isherwood. J. M. Cohen is represented here by a number of his translations for Penguin, publications between 1946 and 1974 fondly annotated (for example 'Edward with love Jack. April 1963.') until we reach the last, *The New Penguin Dictionary of Quotations* of 1992, where Upward has written against Cohen's name on the title page: 'my friend Jack who turned against me in the end'. Cox remarks succinctly: 'a sad memorial to fifty years of friendship'.

Inspection of these books shows that Upward had one trait that will endear him to bibliographers, scholars and critics: he often pencilled in the date when he read a book, so we know that he completed reading George Moore's *Esther Waters* on 17 February 1924, and we know further from Cox's annotation that Upward and Isherwood read alternate chapters to each other at Cambridge. The poet W. J. Turner was read in October 1923, and Clive Bell's *On British Freedom* in January 1926, in a copy given to him by Isherwood (and repaired

by Upward, who on the paper spine he added, attributed the book to Roger Fry!) The most important dating, perhaps, is of Upward and Isherwood's reading of Freud. The copy here of the *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (1923) is signed 'C B Isherwood' and dated on his twenty-first birthday, 26 August 1925. In Upward's hand is added the date 4 April 1926, and there are pencil markings in the text, and page references on the rear paste-down. More extensive attention was devoted to Jung's *Psychological Types* (published 1926—but without a date of reading), where rear endpaper notes include this remark: 'Jung gave status to the "emotive" imagery which I.A.R. belittled'. Upward is here developing his dissatisfaction with I. A. Richards, who had not responded seriously enough to an approach from Upward after a lecture in 1925, and was to be opposed in 'Sketch for a Marxist Interpretation of Literature' in 1937. Upward's annotations to Jung suggest an interest in arguments concerning the objective reality of feelings, which will not surprise admirers of *Journey to the Border*. On p. 211, for example, a pencilled arrow points to this sentence: 'The unconscious disposes of a whole world of images, whose boundless range yields in nothing to the claims of the world of "real" things'. The endpapers quote from p. 556: 'The primordial image [,] then [,] is the psychic expression of an anatomically and physiologically determined disposition'. The imaginative and the material: without for a moment suggesting that he relied upon Jung, we can see prefigured here Upward's struggle between the dream and the material (and inevitably political) world.

There is much else here of interest, such as the battered copy of *Ulysses*, bought in Paris in 1926, and a delightful letter from the poet Robert Nichols, worn but carefully preserved, in which Nichols comments helpfully on Upward's schoolboy poetry, recommending 'Bobby Graves' and ending 'Send me some more when you feel like it—I believe in you' (8 May 1920). Upward's Isle of Wight friendships are well represented by the books of Neville Braybrooke and his wife June, who published novels under the name Isobel English, and by those which David Gascoyne presented to Upward and his wife Hilda, and including amongst ephemera 'an open letter to Terry Waite by Gascoyne's wife' Judy (unnamed here). A number of books from Adrian Mitchell testify to his friendship and admiration, and a quotation from a letter by him written in 1991 to accompany *Adrian Mitchell's Greatest Hits* goes far to explain why so many people believe Upward to be important: 'We love your writing and value your steadfastness. Truth and great writing were never fashionable and

never will be. But people will always read your prose and take strength from it'.

ALAN MUNTON

Dr Alan Munton is Archivist at the University of Plymouth, England. He is preparing a book on Wyndham Lewis and websites on Lewis and Ronald Duncan.

Recent and Forthcoming Books

The Idea of North, by Peter Davidson (London: Reaktion Books, 2005), explores the concept of "north" through history, imagination, and geography. Its illuminating pages on Auden are among the many attractions of this exciting and engaging work.

Auden and Christianity, by Arthur Kirsch (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), is an important contribution to Auden studies. A review will appear in a forthcoming issue of the *Newsletter*.

Randall Jarrell on W. H. Auden, edited by Stephen Burt, with Hannah Brooks-Motl (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), is a reconstructed and annotated text of Jarrell's lectures on Auden, delivered in Princeton in 1951-52, and perhaps more illuminating on Jarrell than on Auden.

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