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## *The Unknown Citizen*

[W. H. Auden](#) - 1907-1973



(To JS/07 M 378

*This Marble Monument*

*Is Erected by the State)*

He was found by the Bureau of Statistics to be  
 One against whom there was no official complaint,  
 And all the reports on his conduct agree  
 That, in the modern sense of an old-fashioned word, he was a saint,  
 For in everything he did he served the Greater Community.  
 Except for the War till the day he retired  
 He worked in a factory and never got fired,  
 But satisfied his employers, Fudge Motors Inc.  
 Yet he wasn't a scab or odd in his views,  
 For his Union reports that he paid his dues,  
 (Our report on his Union shows it was sound)  
 And our Social Psychology workers found  
 That he was popular with his mates and liked a drink.  
 The Press are convinced that he bought a paper every day  
 And that his reactions to advertisements were normal in every way.  
 Policies taken out in his name prove that he was fully insured,  
 And his Health-card shows he was once in hospital but left it cured.  
 Both Producers Research and High-Grade Living declare  
 He was fully sensible to the advantages of the Instalment Plan  
 And had everything necessary to the Modern Man,  
 A phonograph, a radio, a car and a frigidaire.  
 Our researchers into Public Opinion are content  
 That he held the proper opinions for the time of year;  
 When there was peace, he was for peace: when there was war, he went.



W. H. Auden was admired for his unsurpassed technical virtuosity and ability to write poems in nearly every imaginable verse form; his incorporation of popular culture, current events, and vernacular speech in his work; and also for the vast range of his intellect, which drew easily from an extraordinary variety of literatures, art forms, social and political theories, and scientific and technical information.

Themes

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He was married and added five children to the population,  
Which our Eugenist says was the right number for a parent of his  
generation.

And our teachers report that he never interfered with their education.  
Was he free? Was he happy? The question is absurd:  
Had anything been wrong, we should certainly have heard.

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## More by W. H. Auden

*In Memory of Sigmund  
Freud*

W. H. Auden  
1940

*On the Circuit*

W. H. Auden  
1965

*Friday's Child (audio  
only)*

Click the icon above to  
listen to this audio poem.

W. H. Auden  
1964

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Jon Davis  
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