



T54

Funeral Blues

Auden wrote two different versions of this poem: the original version in five stanzas, which was a parody of a poem of mourning for a political leader written for the verse play *The Ascent of F6* (1936, written with Christopher Isherwood), and the 1938 version in four stanzas that became famous when it was recited in the film *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (1994).

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,
Prevent the dog from barking¹ with a juicy bone²,
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum³
Bring out the coffin⁴, let the mourners come⁵.

Rhyme scheme:

- 5 Let aeroplanes circle moaning⁶ overhead
Scribbling⁷ on the sky the message He Is Dead.
Put crêpe bows⁸ round the white necks of the public doves⁹,
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.

- He was my North, my South, my East and West,
10 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.

- The stars are not wanted now; put out every one¹⁰,
Pack up¹¹ the moon and dismantle the sun,
15 Pour away¹² the ocean and sweep up¹³ the wood;
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

Wystan Hugh Auden
Another Time
(1940)

- 1 Prevent ... barking. Impedire al cane di abbaiare.
2 juicy bone. Osso succulento.
3 with muffled drum. Al segnale attutito del tamburo.
4 coffin. Feretro.
5 let ... come. Fate entrare i dolenti.
6 moaning. Gemendo.
7 Scribbling. Scarabocchiando.
8 crêpe bows. Nastri di crespo (tessuto).
9 public doves. Piccioni.
10 put out every one. Spegnetele una a una.
11 Pack up. Imballate.
12 Pour away. Scolate.
13 sweep up. Spazzate via.

VISUAL ANALYSIS

1 WRITE a caption to describe the content of each stanza.

- Stanza 1:
- Stanza 2:
- Stanza 3:
- Stanza 4:

2 LOOK at the visual analysis of the text. Write down what each highlight and colour represents and fill in the missing details in the box next to the text.

- He



3 **DISCUSS** the following questions in pairs.

- 1 Why does the speaker use so many imperatives?
- 2 Why does the speaker want to silence the clocks and telephones?
- 3 Why do you think the speaker wants to remove the moon and the sun?
- 4 Auden draws together words in an unexpected way to achieve striking images. Can you provide some examples from the poem?
- 5 Describe the poet's attitude in line 12.

➤ **COMPETENCE: PRODUCING A WRITTEN TEXT ON A GIVEN SUBJECT**

4 **WRITE** a 10/12-line paragraph to draw a comparison between W.B. Yeats (→ 6.12), T.S. Eliot (→ 6.13) and W.H. Auden (→ 6.14) as regards

- choice of poetic forms;
- language;
- themes;
- view of the function of poetry.