



## **The Dyer's Hand**

*W.H. Auden*

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In this volume, W. H. Auden assembled, edited, and arranged the best of his prose writing, including the famous lectures he delivered as Oxford Professor of Poetry. The result is less a formal collection of essays than an extended and linked series of observations—on poetry, art, and the observation of life in general.

*The Dyer's Hand* is a surprisingly personal, intimate view of the author's mind, whose central focus is poetry—Shakespearean poetry in particular—but whose province is the author's whole experience of the twentieth century.

## The Dyer's Hand Details

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Author : W.H. Auden

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## From Reader Review The Dyer's Hand for online ebook

### Maurizio Manco says

"Talvolta trovo un libro che mi sembra sia stato scritto per me e per me soltanto. Come un amante geloso, non voglio che nessun altro ne abbia notizia. Ebbene, avere un milione di lettori simili, ciascuno ignaro dell'esistenza degli altri, che ti leggano con passione e non ne parlino mai, è senza alcun dubbio il sogno ad occhi aperti di ogni scrittore." (p. 25)

"Il poeta è il padre del suo poema; madre ne è la lingua." (p. 36)

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### Harper Curtis says

Great. Great. Great.

At the end of his essay on Frost, Auden declares that of Hardy, Yeats and Frost (who all wrote epitaphs for themselves), Frost has the best. I have to agree Auden but who knew it was a contest?

Here are the epitaphs:

Hardy

I never cared for life, life cared for me.  
And hence I owe it some fidelity...

Yeats

Cast a cold eye  
On life and death.  
Horseman, pass by.

Frost

I would have written of me on my stone  
I had a lover's quarrel with the world.

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### Bethany says

Auden's collection of essays displays a keen insight into literature garnished by wit and creative interpretation. I particularly enjoyed his essay on Shakespeare's "Henry IV," "The Prince's Dog" which discussed at length the character of Falstaff, examining why he is an audience favorite and why his absence becomes necessary in Henry V. Also noteworthy was his essay on the character of Iago, "The Joker in the Pack," which discussed the parallels between Shakespearean villainy and the practical joker: the desire to create havoc with no motivation.

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### **Adelaide McGinnity says**

A fantastic collection of essays that demonstrate Auden's skill at writing the profound in a way that is easily accessible to the learned, but non-academic reader. Oh, if only modern literary criticism could have taken after Auden instead of Derrida!

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### **Charlie says**

I found myself transcribing long passages of Auden into my journal. His method of cutting through the noise of culture should be illuminating for any thinker or writer. For example: "What the mass media offers is not popular art, but entertainment which is intended to be consumed like food, forgotten, and replaced by a new dish." He can fill any poet with a volatile combination of doubt and purpose.

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### **Thomas says**

A bit of a grab-bag of occasional critical writings - some of which are more successful than others. Some of the essays are great (I especially enjoyed the first third of the book), and Auden is always fantastically quotable.

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### **secondwomn says**

auden's humor and erudition make every one of these essays a delight.

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### **Dmitry says**

A delicious collection of witty, erudite and companionable essays, this book's true topic is its author. There is no better recommendation.

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### **Peter Crofts says**

I've been reading this, and rereading parts, off and on for years. It will amuse you, infuriate you and eat up much time as you figure out where you stand in relation to some of his opinions. Certainly one of the more engrossing set of essays I've come across.

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### **Amy says**

What a completely strange & engrossing collection of essays. They are (so far) a little bit aphoristic and very

certain of themselves, in which Auden stands on his soapbox and tells it as he sees it. Oddly enough, I find myself completely charmed by this mild ego-mania and actually agree with him most of the time. Some of his thoughts on the writer's life are pretty hilarious:

"But if a stranger in the train asks me my occupation, I never answer 'writer' for fear that he may go on to ask me what I write, and to answer 'poetry' would embarrass us both, for we both know that nobody can earn a living simply by writing poetry. (The most satisfactory answer I have discovered, satisfactory because it withers curiosity, is to say Medieval Historian.)

"In our age, if a young person is untalented, the odds are in favor of his imagining he wants to write."

And I love his proposed curriculum at the imaginary College of Bards, which includes the expected foreign language requirements, but also memorizing thousands of lines of poetry, writing parodies of poems instead of literary criticism, and a requirement to look after a pet and cultivate a garden!

He also has more serious & apt insights into poem-making:

"[The poet] will never be able to say: 'Tomorrow I will write a poem and, thanks to my training and experience, I already know I shall do a good job.' In the eyes of others a man is a poet if he has written one good poem. In his own he is only a poet at the moment when he is making his last revision to a new poem. The moment, before, he was still only a potential poet; the moment after, he is a man who has ceased to write poetry, perhaps forever."

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### **Simran Narendra says**

The book is pensive, crafty and skilful! You cannot skip it and you will have to read it completely to understand the philosophy of the poet.

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### **Anthony says**

collected essays of auden; some inspired, some not so much. in the first essay, auden teaches you how to read, presumably so that you can read the rest of his essays properly, because "as readers, most of us, to some degree, are like those urchins who pencil mustaches on the faces of girls in advertisements." well, auden, i tried to read your book on my best behavior but i confess i doodled lips kissing a butt all over your essay on robert frost.

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### **Malini Sridharan says**

To use his own terms, Auden is often a bore but rarely boring. He is kind of priggish and the topics he discusses are pretty staid, but I liked most of what he had to say. Most sections are liberally seeded with bon mots, some broken down to a series of sometimes funny, sometimes insightful "notes" for an essay. I laughed quite a bit while reading, which I did not expect.

I should also say that this is almost EXACTLY what I thought Auden would sound like after reading

### **Paola says**

parte prima: prologo

- leggere
- scrivere

parte seconda: la mano del tintore:

- fare, conoscere, giudicare
- la vergine e la dinamo
- il poeta e la "polis"

parte terza: la fonte di narciso

- "hic et ille"
- balaam e la sua asina
- il presbiterio colpevole
- l'io senza se stesso

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