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The Power of the Powerless: Three Political Poems by W.H.Auden.

"Three poems by W.H.Auden, two of them amongst his best known but also most controversial, highlight the problem of the creative artist as would-be activist. Auden's perception of good and evil, and also of "the just", though expressed with great eloquence in his work, is also a statement of frustration at the inability of the latter to confront historically driven evil effectively. In these poems there is also a tension between the public and private persona of the poet and a sort of resolution seems to be sought in a commitment to personal love between individuals which provides a refuge from the unappetising choices of the activist. It is argued that Auden showed considerable integrity in openly and self-critically confronting these issues -- with the result that he was prepared to disown some of his most admired work."