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The Complete Works of W. H. Auden

Edited by Edward Mendelson

In 1928 Stephen Spender hand-printed thirty copies of a small volume of poems by his friend W. H. Auden—the first published book by a man who was to become the dominant literary figure of his generation and one of the century's greatest poets. Sixty years later, Princeton University Press inaugurates an eight-volume edition of the complete works of Auden, which is intended to serve as the definitive text for all the works Auden published or intended to publish in the form in which he expected to see them printed: his plays and other drama, libretti, essays and reviews, and poems.

The Complete Works of W. H. Auden will provide a unique opportunity to solve the numerous textual problems connected with the severe revisions Auden made in his own works. The texts will be newly edited from Auden's manuscripts by Edward Mendelson, the literary executor of the Auden estate. As presented in this edition, they will be absolutely clean, with the notes appearing only at the ends of the volumes, along with variant readings from all published versions, as well as hitherto unpublished drafts or revisions. Also included will be introductions placing the works in the context of literary traditions and relating them to Auden's life and times.



Plays and Other Dramatic Writings, 1928–1938

W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood
Edited by Edward Mendelson

This volume contains W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood's dramatic extravaganzas *The Dog Beneath the Skin*, *The Ascent of F 6*, and *On the Frontier*. It also includes the two versions of *Paid on Both Sides*—which are so different as to constitute two works—and Auden's satiric revue *The Dance of Death*. Two plays appear in print for the first time, Auden and Isherwood's *The Enemies of a Bishop* and Auden's *The Chase*. Also included are Auden's prose and verse written for documentary films, a cabaret sketch, and an unpublished radio script. Many of the texts include poems by the young Auden that have never been published before. The extensive historical and textual notes trace the

complex history of the production and revision of these plays, including full texts of rewritten scenes.

During the years when these works were created, Auden moved from a "poetry of isolation" to more expansive and public writing. After he left Oxford at age twenty-one, during the summer of 1928, he wrote the tragicomic charade *Paid on Both Sides*. During the next ten years, until he left England for America, he created the increasingly ambitious works for stage, film, and broadcast that appear in this volume.

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New Orleans, Louisiana 27–30 December 1988

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