

## LULLABY

W H Auden

Lay your sleeping head, my love,  
Human on my faithless arm;  
Time and fevers burn away  
Individual beauty from  
Thoughtful children and the grave  
Proves the child ephemeral:  
But in my arms till break of day  
Let the living creature lie,  
Mortal, guilty, but to me  
The entirely beautiful.

Soul and body have no bounds:  
To lovers as they lie upon  
Her tolerant enchanted slope  
In their ordinary swoon,  
Grave the vision Venus sends  
Of supernatural sympathy,  
Universal love and hope;  
While an abstract insight wakes  
Among the glaciers and the rocks  
The hermit's sensual ecstasy.

Certainty, fidelity  
On the stroke of midnight pass  
Like vibrations of a bell,  
And fashionable madmen raise  
Their pedantic boring cry:  
Every farthing of the cost,  
All the dreaded cards foretell,  
Shall be paid, but from this night  
Not a whisper, not a thought,  
Not a kiss nor look be lost.

Beauty, midnight, vision dies:  
Let the winds of dawn that blow  
Softly round your dreaming head  
Such a day of welcome show  
Eye and knocking heart may bless,  
Find the mortal world enough;  
Noons of dryness see you fed

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By the involuntary powers,  
Nights of insult let you pass  
Watched by every human love.