

## Lullaby Summary

Writer: W. H. Auden | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

**Background:** W. H. Auden wrote “Lullaby” in 1937, during a tense time between the two World Wars. Europe was filled with fear, political unrest, and moral doubt. Auden turned to love as a form of peace and truth in this uncertain world. The poem shows that even in dark times, human love can be pure, gentle, and sacred.

### Summary

**Stanza 1 - The Sleeping Beloved and the Power of Love:** The poem opens with the image of a lover watching the beloved sleeping peacefully. The night is calm, soft, and filled with safety. The speaker lovingly calls the beloved “mortal, guilty, but to me the entirely beautiful.” He knows that all humans are flawed and make mistakes. Yet he finds beauty and holiness in this imperfect human love. He wishes that time would stop so that this tender moment could last forever. Love here appears gentle, forgiving, and pure, like a sacred force that makes human weakness beautiful.

**Stanza 2 - A Blessing of Peace and Protection:** In the second stanza, the speaker blesses the beloved’s body and prays for peace. He asks the night spirits to guard the sleeping figure from harm. He understands that beauty fades and life moves quickly. But he believes that love can bring light even in darkness. This stanza expresses both care and acceptance. The lover wants to protect this fragile happiness. He knows it cannot last forever. To him, this quiet hour of intimacy is enough and sacred. This is a small moment of truth in a world full of change.

**Stanza 3 - Reflection on the World and Human Love:** The third stanza moves from the bedroom to the wider world. The speaker thinks about people outside. He observes how people chase fame, power, and success, and how those pursuits bring pain and emptiness. He contrasts worldly ambition with the simple truth of love. He believes the heart’s kindness is greater than any moral law or political order. He knows that all human relationships are temporary, yet he sees this moment of affection as pure and honest. Love, in its humanity, becomes a moral truth stronger than pride or fear.

**Stanza 4 - Acceptance of Time and the Value of Love:** In the final stanza, the speaker accepts that night will soon end and morning will come. The quiet spell of love will break. Real life will return. Still, he feels no regret. He thanks love for its grace and beauty, even if it lasts only a short time. He accepts that death and age will come again, but the peace of this night

remains eternal in memory. The poem ends with a tone of blessing and gratitude that is a prayer for all lovers to cherish love as the purest gift of human life.

LxNotes