

Musee Des Beaux Arts Summary

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

Summary

Stanza 1 - Human Indifference to Suffering: The poem starts calmly. Auden says old painters knew life well. They saw that people suffer, yet others keep living. Someone may cry while others walk or eat. A child may play near someone's pain. Even animals go on normally. The world does not stop for sorrow. Pain happens quietly beside daily life. This shows people often ignore others' suffering.

Stanza 2 - The Fall of Icarus: The poet talks about Bruegel's painting "The Fall of Icarus." In the picture, Icarus falls into the sea. No one looks or cares. A farmer plows his field. A ship sails slowly away. The bright sun shines as if nothing happened. Only Icarus's legs show in the water. Life continues, though someone dies. People are busy with their own world.

Overall, Life Moves On: Auden shows that the world stays busy and cold. People see pain but look away. Big events happen, yet life continues as usual. The poem is quiet but sad. It reminds us that humans often fail to feel for others. Auden wants us to notice suffering and be kind.