

Petition Summary

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

Background

The poem "*Petition*" by W. H. Auden is about asking for help to fix people's problems. Auden wants people to heal from pain, fear, and lies. He asks for people to become brave and honest. He hopes for change in the world so people can live better lives. The poem shows Auden's wish for everyone to be happier and kinder.

Summary:

Request for Healing and Forgiveness: The speaker begins by asking for forgiveness and help for everyone. He is not anyone's enemy and asks for kindness. He wishes for healing from physical pain, like the "neural itch," and emotional pain caused by things like lies and confusion. He wants a powerful and caring touch to cure these problems.

Hope for Bravery and Honesty: The speaker wishes that people could become more honest and brave. He hopes they stop responding with fake, rehearsed answers. He asks for help to correct the fear inside people, so they can stand tall and face life's challenges instead of running away.

Guidance for Those in Retreat: The speaker is concerned about people who are hiding or retreating because of fear. He wishes for them to be covered in light so they can be encouraged to turn back and face life, even when it seems hard. He believes that with support, they can stop running away from their fears.

Recognition for Healers: The speaker asks for healers, like doctors or wise people, who live in cities or country homes, to be recognized and appreciated. These healers can bring comfort and solutions to people who are in pain or lost.

Hope for Change and Peace: The poem ends with a wish for peace for the dead and a hope for change in people's hearts. The speaker asks for a new way of thinking, like a "new style of architecture," which means he wants people to change their outlook on life. He hopes for a brighter future where people learn to live better and more peaceful lives.

