

*The Island. War and Belonging in Auden's England.* By Nicholas Jenkins. Harvard University Press, 2024  
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A groundbreaking reassessment of W. H. Auden's early life and poetry, shedding new light on his artistic development as well as on his shifting beliefs about political belonging in interwar England. From his first poems in 1922 to the publication of his landmark collection *On This Island* in the mid-1930s, W. H. Auden wrestled with the meaning of Englishness. His early works are prized for their psychological depth, yet Nicholas Jenkins argues that they are political poems as well, illuminating Auden's intuitions about a key aspect of modern experience: national identity. Two historical forces, in particular, haunted the poet: the catastrophe of World War I and the subsequent 'rediscovery' of England's rural landscapes by artists and intellectuals.