

As i walked out



As I walked out one evening' is narrated from the perspectives of three voices, an observer, a lover and time. It begins with informing the reader of the specific time and place the story is being related, 'one evening... down Bristol street'. The observer appears to be in a busy environment which might be during the rush hour when many people are on the street hurrying to make their way home from work. He compares the crowd to 'harvest wheat' as if they're ready to be cut down and burnt. In other words, their lives are temporal.

In the second stanza, the observer notices the voice of the lover 'down by the rimming river' which must have echoed through the noise of the crowd. The lover was singing in an unusual spot 'under the arch of the rail-way' which appears an unromantic place to be courting someone as it can be assumed that the lover is actually conversing with someone as well as the lover could be merely singing the song to no one in particular. The lover begins with, which could be, the title and motif of the song 'Love has no ending'. Love is expressed in exaggerated assertions '... till China and Africa meet, ... till the ocean is folded'.

These impossibilities reflect the extent or depth of the love, but could imply that the lover is inexperienced and infatuated as mentioned in the song that this is the lover's 'first love of the world'. In the sixth stanza, Auden makes an abrupt transition using the contrasting conjunction, 'But', that contradicts the lover's unending love with the third voice, time, making an appearance. The strict and uncompromising voice of the time speaks as if it is talking back to the lover 'O let not Time deceive you'. Time is written in capital 't'

to highlight its omnipotence that love ' cannot conquer' because it is controlled by time.

Auden furthermore, employs a pileup of dark imagery to present time as if it is lurking in the ' shadow', carrying cruel justice. The poem uses quatrain rhyming of ABCB as well as, each stanza being four lines long which highlights the consistency of time along with Auden's fellow poem, ' If I could tell you'. The rhythm of the poem is iambic tetrameter and triameter because the rhythms use iambs of four beats with three beats to the line. This poem adopts a music quality. As a whole, the structure attempts to show the characteristics of time.