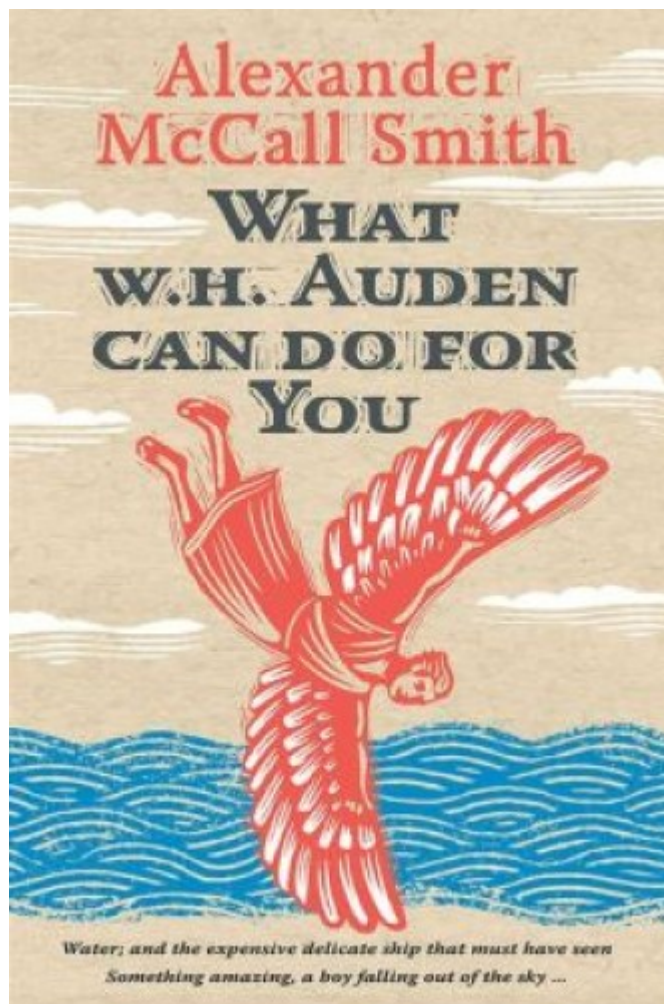


*What W. H. Auden Can Do for You*, by Alexander McCall Smith

Books in the [October 30, 2013](#) issue

## In Review



### What W. H. Auden Can Do for You

By Alexander McCall Smith  
Princeton University Press

It is no surprise to people who have read Smith's novels that he has an appreciation for the poetry of W. H. Auden, since his fictional figure Isabel Dalhousie—Edinburgh philosopher and detective—looks to Auden for guidance. Auden would likely

challenge the notion that his poetry can do anything for the reader, but Smith claims that Auden can change one's life and is particularly helpful in finding one's way through the dark places of life. Auden's "September 1, 1939" was widely circulated after 9/11, despite the fact that Auden had disparaged the poem himself. The book is part of Princeton's Writers on Writers series.