

'If I Could Tell You' by WH Auden

Time will say nothing but I told you so

Time only knows the price we have to pay;

If I could tell you I would let you know.

If we should weep when clowns put on their show,

If we should stumble when musicians play,

Time will say nothing but I told you so.

There are no fortunes to be sold, although,

Because I love you more than I can say,

If I could tell you I would let you know.

The winds must come from somewhere when they blow,

There must be reason why the leaves decay;

Time will say nothing but I told you so.

Perhaps the roses really want to grow,

The vision seriously intends to stay;

If I could tell you I would let you know.

Suppose the lions all get up and go,

And the brooks and soldiers run away;

Will Time say nothing but I told you so?

If I could tell you I would let you know.

Purple: References to price/paying ---> allusions to materialism/alienation?

Poem is a VILLANELLE - 5 three-line stanzas, finishing with a quatrain.

Blue: repeated phrases reflect repetitive nature of events? Suggests that all occurrences "boil down" to one key concept/theme.

Discusses uncertainty of future events, implies that we are subjected to a random and immediate scheme of occurrences. We may be completely incorrect in our view of life.