

Stephen Robertson

The truth about x

O tell me the truth about love — *W H Auden*

Relate to me now the truth about x.
Is it enormous or small?
Does it pass through all the standard checks?
Will it rise or rapidly fall?
If I find it squared will it deviously split
the solution into two?
if I squeeze it hard can I make it fit
into, out or through?

Is it saying there may be some shocking scenes,
just so that I'm tempted to watch?
Will it show my insides displayed on the screen,
so the doctor finds something to patch?
Will it find I've a yen to make audiences laugh,
so my name should be written in lights?
Is it merely the line at the foot of the graph,
so that y can now scale the heights?

Relate to me now the truth about X.
Is it going to stay or to go?
Is it really simple or quite complex?
Is it plain or hard to know?
Is it written in spray-paint all over the wall,
in order to show me the way?
Will it finally grow to be too tall?
Will it wilt or last all day?

Does it mark the site of the hidden gold
on the secret island map?
(Am I now getting warm or am I quite cold—
should I rest or take a nap?)
Relate to me now how its meaning has grown
from the glyph in the tail of sex
to its role in the world as the well-known unknown.
Oh tell me the truth about x.

