

William Carlos Williams Poetry
from *William Carlos Williams: Selected Poems*
New Directions Books, 1969

The Widow's Lament in Springtime

Sorrow is my own yard
where the new grass
flames as it has flamed
often before but not
with the cold fire
that closes round me this year.
Thirtyfive years
I lived with my husband.
The plumtree is white today
with masses of flowers.
Masses of flowers
load the cherry branches
and color some bushes
yellow and some red
but the grief in my heart
Is stronger than they
for though they were my joy
formerly, today I notice them
And turned away forgetting.
Today my son told me
that in the meadows,
at the edge of the heavy woods
in the distance, he saw
trees of white flowers.
I feel that I would like
to go there
and fall into those flowers
and sink into the marsh near them.

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The Locust Tree in Flower

Among
of
green

stiff
old
bright

broken
branch
come

white
sweet
May

again.

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Pastoral

The little sparrows
hop ingenuously
about the pavement
quarreling
with sharp voices
over those things
that interest them.
But we who are wiser
shut ourselves in
on either hand
and no one knows
whether we thing good
or evil.

Meanwhile,
the old man who goes about
gathering dog-lime
walks in the gutter
without looking up
and his tread
is more majestic than
that of the episcopal minister
approaching the pulpit
of a Sunday.

these things
Astonish me beyond words.

Starting with Little Things

Love the earth like a mole,
fur-near. Nearsighted,
hold close the clods,
their fine-print headlines.
Pat them with soft hands—
But spades, but pink and loving: they

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break rock, nudge giants aside,
affable plow.
Fields are to touch:
each day nuzzle your way.

Tomorrow the world.

Seasons in the Country

1.

When we unfasten the cabin door in
the spring, an echo of our hammering
scares the blue jays, and all our section
of the country turns relevant for a while.

2.

Summer days have been falling thousands
of years; they land quietly in the woods
at dawn and come forward with an embrace
like light on old faces in the family album.

3.

Writing their history in the sky, the last
of the summer birds go away. We hear
empty woods bravely surround our house
in open ranks, for autumn census, unafraid.

4.

The storm that closes all the passes
just is—it doesn't come. It is as quiet
as in the story when the hunted world
wrestled with death in the hidden cave
and nobody ever found out who won.