



Danse Russe

By William Carlos Williams

If I when my wife is sleeping
 and the baby and Kathleen
 are sleeping
 and the sun is a flame-white disc
 in silken mists
 above shining trees,—
 if I in my north room
 dance naked, grotesquely
 before my mirror
 waving my shirt round my head
 and singing softly to myself:
 “I am lonely, lonely.
 I was born to be lonely,
 I am best so!”
 If I admire my arms, my face,
 my shoulders, flanks, buttocks
 against the yellow drawn shades,—

Who shall say I am not
 the happy genius of my household?

William Carlos Williams, “Danse Russe” from *The Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams, Volume I, 1909-1939*, edited by Christopher MacGowan. Copyright 1938, 1944, 1945 by William Carlos Williams. Reprinted with the permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation.

Poet Bio



Born in Rutherford, William Carlos Williams spent almost his entire life in his native New Jersey. He was a medical doctor, poet, novelist, essayist, and playwright. With Ezra Pound and H.D., Williams was a leading poet of the Imagist movement and often wrote of American subjects and themes. Though his career was initially overshadowed by other poets, he became an inspiration to the Beat generation in the 1950s and 60s.

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By William Carlos Williams

Her body is not so white as
anemony petals nor so smooth—nor...

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Of course you are polyethnic, your look does not change...

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mi garganta, my throat...

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