**WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS (1883-1963)**

**“Death” (C version, 1930)**

He's dead  
the dog won't have to  
sleep on his potatoes  
any more to keep them  
from freezing  
  
he's dead  
the old bastard—  
He's a bastard because  
  
there's nothing  
legitimate in him any  
more  
           he's dead  
He's sick dead  
  
                         he's  
a godforsaken curio  
without  
any breath in it  
  
He's nothing at all  
              he's dead  
shrunken up to the skin  
  
            Put his head on  
one chair and his  
feet on another and  
he'll lie there  
like an acrobat—  
  
Love's beaten. He  
beat it. That's why  
he's insufferable—  
  
            because  
he's here needing a  
shave and making love  
an inside howl  
of anguish and defeat—  
  
He's come out of the man  
and he's let  
the man go—  
                  the liar  
  
Dead  
       his eyes  
rolled up out of  
the light—a mockery  
  
                                   which  
love cannot touch—  
  
just bury it  
and hide its face  
for shame.

**“The Dead Baby” (1925)**  
  
Sweep the house   
under the feet of the curious   
holiday seekers--   
sweep under the table and the bed   
the baby is dead--   
  
The mother's eye's where she sits   
by the window, unconsoled--   
have purple bags under them   
the father--   
tall, wellspoken, pitiful   
is the abler of these two--   
  
Sweep the house clean   
here is one who has gone up   
(unproblematically)   
to heaven, blindly   
by force of the facts--   
a clean sweep   
is one way of expressing it--   
  
Hurry up! any minute   
they will be bringing it   
from the hospital--   
a white model of our lives   
a curiosity   
surrounded by fresh flowers.