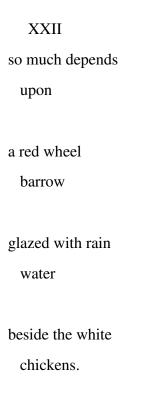
COLLEGE GUILD

PO Box 6448, Brunswick ME 04011

POETRY CLUB-2, UNIT 1 WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

William Carlos Williams, 1883 – 1963, was a Puerto Rican-America poet, one of the early imagists. His work was clearly focused on creating an image, a picture, a scene in all its details. He closely observed. His poems have been called meditative. Some have said Williams thought such detailed perception was necessary for a fuller understand of one's experience. Williams is known as an experimenter, and innovator. (In the assignments below you will have a chance to be an innovator, too.)

The Red Wheelbarrow is one of his most frequently published poems. Williams didn't title this poem. Instead he designated it as XXII, the 22nd poem in the book *Spring and All*. Notice his lack of capitalized letters, and that the poem is just one sentence, and the only punctuation mark is at the end.



- 1. Do you agree with Williams' view of perception as being necessary to life, and that a poem can lead to a fuller understating of one's experience? Explain.
- 2. Do you think titling the poem "The Red Wheelbarrow" would have been more effective than just numbering it? Why or why not?
- 3. Why is his lack of capitalization important to the poem, (or is it)?
- 4. Write a poem, using details to capture an image.

THIS IS JUST TO SAY

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox
and which

you were probably

saving

for breakfast

Forgive me

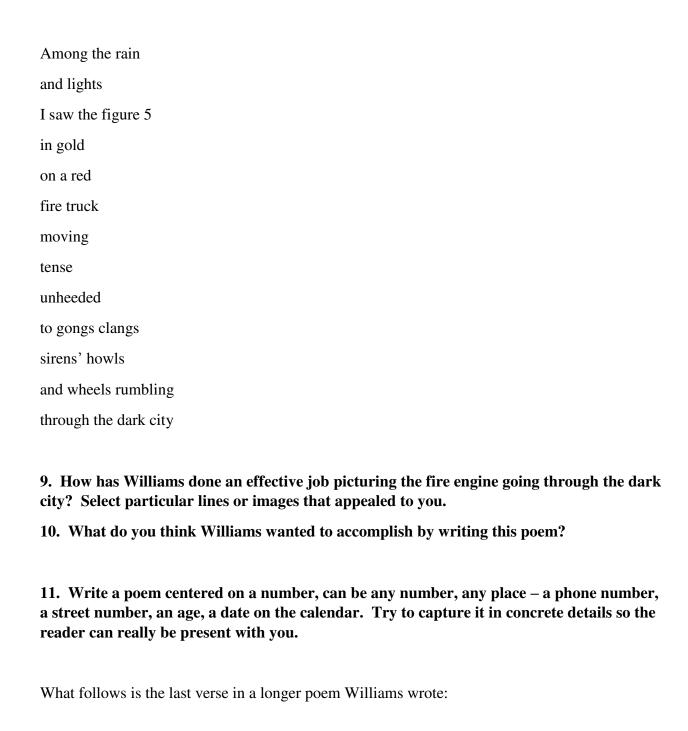
they were delicious

so sweet

and so cold.

- 5. Explain whether you think this could be a love poem?
- 6. How do the line breaks contribute to the impact of this poem?
- 7. Write a poem about a fruit, an animal, something out in nature, and use line breaks like Williams has.
- 8. How did it feel to write a poem that way?

THE GREAT FIGURE



There is a bird in the poplars –

It is the sun!

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21	vım	ming	1n	the	river,
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The bird skims above them –

Day is on his wings.

Phoenix!

It is he that is making

The great gleam among the poplars

It is his singing

Outshines the noise

Of Leaves Clashing the wind

- 12. How effective is Williams' metaphor using the bird for the sun? Point out lines in which he uses this extended metaphor.
- 13. The phoenix is a bird that rises from its own ashes. Why is that word appropriate in the poem?
- 14. Write a poem using an extended metaphor. To get started make a list of nouns and then another list of nouns of what each noun is like, for example Williams' "a sun is like a bird". Or "my love is like a red, red rose". You can chose a car, a house, the moon, and the stars, whatever you like. Then write a poem building on one of these metaphors. This might be hard, but you can do it! The more you write like this, the more you will want to do it!

Remember: First names only & please let us know if your address changes