POEMS

BY WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

BRIEF LIEF

Pray
pay
no attention to my greatness

You
too
could do as well as

I
by
letting root bring forth first

stem
leaf

then
when
ready, at the last (if ever)

sweet
meat.

ELECTION DAY

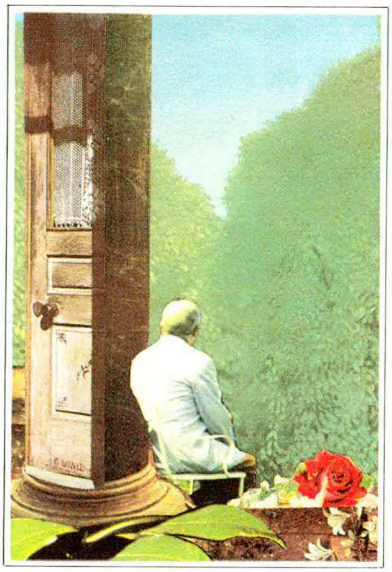
Warm sun, quiet air
an old man sits

in the doorway of
a broken house—

boards for windows
plaster falling

from between the stones
and strokes the head

of a spotted dog



CONVENTIONAL BALLAD

Ladies, ladies! what you offer
is not always what we please—
Why shouldn't he stand in a
telephone booth a block
from home and chew candy?

Our heads fail us
the measure lags behind the
elastic order grasped in
a split second by our
more ready knees.

Take off the wraps. Let us
breathe, let us breathe only!
Is there no choice
save only by a process of
condemnation? Ladies,
Ladies, ladies, ladies!

10/14

Rose in the park
with a white center
blood red
single rose—

the scraping of
fallen leaves still leaves
your loveliness
unshaken

REPLY

(crumpled on her desk)

Dear Bill: I've made a
couple of sandwiches for you.
In the icebox you'll find
blueberries—a cup of grapefruit
a glass of cold coffee.

On the stove is the teapot
with enough tea leaves
for you to make tea if you
prefer—Just light the gas—
boil the water and put in the tea

Plenty of bread in the breadbox
and butter and eggs—
I didn't know just what to
make for you. Several people
called up about office hours—

See you later. Love. Floss.

Please switch off the telephone.

These unpublished poems were discovered by Professor Robert Bertholf in the Poetry Collection of the State University of New York at Buffalo. They are not in Williams's Collected Poems. *This marks their first known magazine appearance.*

ILLUSTRATION BY CAROL WALD

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