

POETRY NOW!

Humorous Praise poem

Perfection

by William Carlos Williams

O lovely apple!
beautifully and completely

rotten,
hardly a contour marred—

perhaps a little
shriveled at the top but that

aside perfect
in every detail! O lovely

apple! What a
deep and suffusing brown

mantles that
unspoiled surface! No one

has moved you
since I placed you on the porch

to ripen a month ago
to ripen.

No one. No one!

© **William Carlos Williams** (1883-1963). *Williams, one of our most famous American poets, was born of an English father (whose name was William George Williams) and a Puerto Rican mother. He grew up in rural New Jersey and worked most of his life as a family doctor, as well as writing poetry. He was one of the first poets to look closely at, and write about, everyday things.*

Poetry Idea

Here is a poem that celebrates—of all things—a rotten apple. But not just any rotten apple, an apple the poet himself has placed on a windowsill and forgotten about. Later, he discovers it untouched and perfectly, gloriously round and brown.

1. Prowl about and find some neglected object of yours--your bed that hasn't been made in weeks, a pile of your dusty books, an old dead tree you used to climb, a hideous shirt that you once loved. Try looking at it with new eyes, as though it is a treasure. ("O Barbie sleeping bag! Curled like a fat, dead caterpillar on my closet shelf!")
2. Describe it lovingly, pointing out its endearing ugliness. ("Still lined with flesh-pink flannel, and stamped with blurred, blue-eyed, zombified Barbie faces.")
3. Relate any memories associated with the object. ("Remember the sleepover at Tara's house, when I cried for an hour before falling asleep?")
4. Try summing up how you feel about this object, now that you have reconsidered it. ("I think I'll keep you perched up there on your shelf, like a skin I've grown out of.")

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