

## "Smell!"

by William Carlos Williams

Oh strong-ridged and deeply hollowed  
nose of mine! what will you not be smelling?  
What tactless asses we are, you and I, boney nose,  
always indiscriminate, always unashamed,  
and now it is the souring flowers of the bedraggled  
poplars: a festering pulp on the wet earth  
beneath them. With what deep thirst  
we quicken our desires  
to that rank odor of a passing springtime!  
Can you not be decent? Can you not reserve your ardors  
for something less unlovely? What girl will care  
for us, do you think, if we continue in these ways?  
Must you taste everything? Must you know everything?  
Must you have a part in everything?

## "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?

A Supermarket in California

## Related Poem Content Details

By [Allen Ginsberg](#)

What thoughts I have of you tonight Walt Whitman, for I walked down the sidestreets under the trees with a headache self-conscious looking at the full moon.

In my hungry fatigue, and shopping for images, I went into the neon fruit supermarket, dreaming of your enumerations!

What peaches and what penumbras! Whole families shopping at night! Aisles full of husbands! Wives in the avocados, babies in the tomatoes!—and you, Garcia Lorca, what were you doing down by the watermelons?

I saw you, Walt Whitman, childless, lonely old grubber, poking among the meats in the refrigerator and eyeing the grocery boys.

I heard you asking questions of each: Who killed the pork chops? What price bananas? Are you my Angel?

I wandered in and out of the brilliant stacks of cans following you, and followed in my imagination by the store detective.

We strode down the open corridors together in our solitary fancy tasting artichokes, possessing every frozen delicacy, and never passing the cashier.

Where are we going, Walt Whitman? The doors close in an hour. Which way does your beard point tonight?

(I touch your book and dream of our odyssey in the supermarket and feel absurd.)

Will we walk all night through solitary streets? The trees add shade to shade, lights out in the houses, we'll both be lonely.

Will we stroll dreaming of the lost America of love past blue automobiles in driveways, home to our silent cottage?

Ah, dear father, graybeard, lonely old courage-teacher, what America did you have when Charon quit poling his ferry and you got out on a smoking bank and stood watching the boat disappear on the black waters of Lethe?

*Berkeley, 1955*

# "Grandfather advised me" or "Poet's Work"

by Lorine Niedecker

## *Poet's Work*

Grandfather  
advised me:  
Learn a trade

I learned  
to sit at desk  
and condense

No layoff  
from this  
condensery

## Lorine Niedecker's "You are my friend"

You are my friend--  
you bring me peaches  
and the high bush cranberry

you carry

my fishpole

you water my worms  
you patch my boot  
with your mending kit

nothing in it

but my hand

## Lorine Niedecker, "Foreclosure"

### **Foreclosure**

Tell em to take my bare walls down  
my cement abutments  
their parties thereof  
and clause of claws

Leave me the land  
Scratch out: the land

May prose and property both die out  
and leave me peace

## "It isnt for want"

by Cid Corman

It isnt for want  
of something to say —  
something to tell you —  
something you should know —  
but to detain you —  
keep you from going —  
feeling myself here  
as long as *you* are —  
as long as you *are*.

## "The Way"

by Rae Armantrout

Card in pew pocket  
announces,  
"I am here."  
I made only one statement  
because of a bad winter.  
Grease is the word; grease  
is the way  
I am feeling.  
Real life emergencies or  
flubbing behind the scenes.  
As a child,  
I was abandoned  
in a story  
made of trees.  
Here's the small  
gasp  
of this clearing  
come "upon" "again"