

## THE HARD CORE OF BEAUTY

The most marvelous is not  
the beauty, deep as that is,  
but the classic attempt  
at beauty,  
at the swamp's center: the  
dead-end highway, abandoned  
when the new bridge went in finally.  
There, either side an entry

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from which, burned by the sun,  
the paint is peeling—  
two potted geraniums  
Step inside: on a wall, a  
painted plaque showing  
ripe pomegranates  
—and, leaving, note  
down the road—on a thumbnail,  
you could sketch it on a thumbnail—  
stone steps climbing  
full up the front to  
a second floor  
minuscule  
portico  
peaked like the palate  
of a child! God give us again  
such assurance.

There are  
rose bushes either side  
*this* entrance and plum trees  
(one dead) surrounded  
at the base by worn-out auto-tire  
casings! for what purpose  
but the glory of the Godhead  
that poked  
her twin shoulders, supporting  
the draggled blondness

of her tresses, from beneath

the patient waves.

And we? the whole great world abandoned

for nothing at all, intact,

the lost world of symmetry

and grace: bags of charcoal

piled deftly under

the shed at the rear, the

ditch at the very rear a passageway

through the mud,

triumphant! to pleasure,

pleasure; pleasure by boat,

a by-way of a Sunday

to the smooth river.

Williams, W. C., & MacGowan, C. J. (1988). *The Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams: 1939-1962*/Ed. by Christopher MacGowan. Carcanet.