



Michael J. Bugeja

The Influence of William Carlos Williams (2009)

He cannot help this time. I am to blame,
Dreaming of the dead physician-poet,
Immortal lines within a story frame
Inside the office of his old estate.

On 9 Ridge Road in Rutherford. I'm eight:
He's swabbing me with cotton, arm aflame;
I watch him push the needle in, and wait:
He cannot help this time. I am to blame,

Drawing on his influence, mere phantasm,
As he draws blood from me, inoculates
Against the influenzas of acclaim.
Dreaming of the dead physician-poet,

I open envelopes and veins of fate
On the gurney. He listens to the iambs
Of my ordinary heart to demonstrate
Immortal lines within a story frame:

He aims a penlight at the inner drum
Of my ear and shakes his head, irrigates
My tongue and then depresses it: inflamed.
Inside the office of his old estate,

My poems lie in piles. The doctor states
Prognoses candidly and puts the blame
On too much Milton, far too little Yeats,

On too much meter, an overdose of rhyme:
He cannot help me this time.