

Study question about william carlos williams' poem



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Poetic "sincerity" in William Carlos Williams' poem "This Is Just To Say"

William Carlos Williams' poem "This Is Just To Say" conveys a feeling of lustful transgression, commented in a manner of apology but with any profound regret. An imagist by nature (logically enough as a friend of avant-garde modern artists Francis Picabia and Marcel Duchamp and vastly predisposed by Dadaist and Surrealist principles), Williams' poems generally inclines towards a utopian socialist overture. Complementing this ideology in his poems he is ever aware of maintaining an intense sincerity"; an honest expression of a particular feeling experienced by a particular subject at a particular time and place. And in this respect this poem "This Is Just To Say" by the poet is no different.

This poem, disguised as a note glued on the refrigerator, could be interpreted in a multiple dimensions. There is no general agreement on the theme. "The poem could be concerned with the uselessness or self-entrapment of sexual desire, comparable to the expense of spirit in a waste of shame. There's the potential oedipal reading, with the boy thwarted in an attempt to comprehend his origin; to learn of it from his mother. Or there's the reading that would suggest self-referentiality; it is the poem itself that means nothing." (Matterson, 38) And there are scores and grosses of interpretations to this lean poem but the overall truth that ultimately catches the readers' mind is the ultimate sincere approach that the poet takes in this poem. It should be taken into account that the only word capitalized in this poem is the word 'Forgive'. Why would a poet suddenly capitalize a word in the midst of all lower cased words is he is really not sincere with the meaning of the word?

William Carlos Williams' poems stabilized themselves on the opposite pole of

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the likes of Ezra Pounds and especially T. S. Eliots whose poetry depicted recurrent use of reference to foreign art, religion, history or languages. He focused himself predominantly on local themes for his poems and with this smell of well know home court it is but impossible to be anything else but sincere. He was, all his life, sincere to his roots, his works and thereby to his poems as this poem " This Is Just To Say" reflects.

Structurally, this poem represents the simplicity that blends just perfectly with sincere thought process of the poem. " It is typography rather than any kind of phonemic recurrence that provides directions for the speaking voice or for the eye that reads the lines silently." (Marjorie, 26) The sense of sincerity should not only be present within the soul of a poem but must reflect on the physical structure or body of the poem. In Williams' own words, " it metrically absolutely regular. . . . So, dogmatically speaking, it has to be a poem because it goes that way" It is at this point William Carlos Williams' poem " This Is Just To Say" graduates itself from a ordinary poem to some where higher grounds where the critics would be compelled to rate this poem as " sincere". (Marjorie, 26)

Reference

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Perloff, Marjorie. *The dance of the intellect: Studies in the poetry of the pound tradition*. Cambridge University Press. 1985.