Raleigh Was Right

William Carlos Williams. 1944.

We cannot go to the country   
for the country will bring us   
 no peace   
What can the small violets   
tell us that grow on the furry stems   
in the long grass among   
lance shaped leaves?

Though you praise us   
and call to mind the poets   
who sung of our loveliness it was   
long ago!   
long ago!   
when country people   
would plow and sow with   
flowering minds and pockets   
at ease – if ever this were true.

Not now. Love itself a flower   
with roots in a parched ground.   
Empty pockets   
make empty heads. Cure it   
if you can but do not believe   
that we can live today   
in the country   
for the country will bring us   
 no peace.

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