

UNIT 5 Progress & Conflict
Early Twentieth Century 1910–1929

A STEIN SCHOOL
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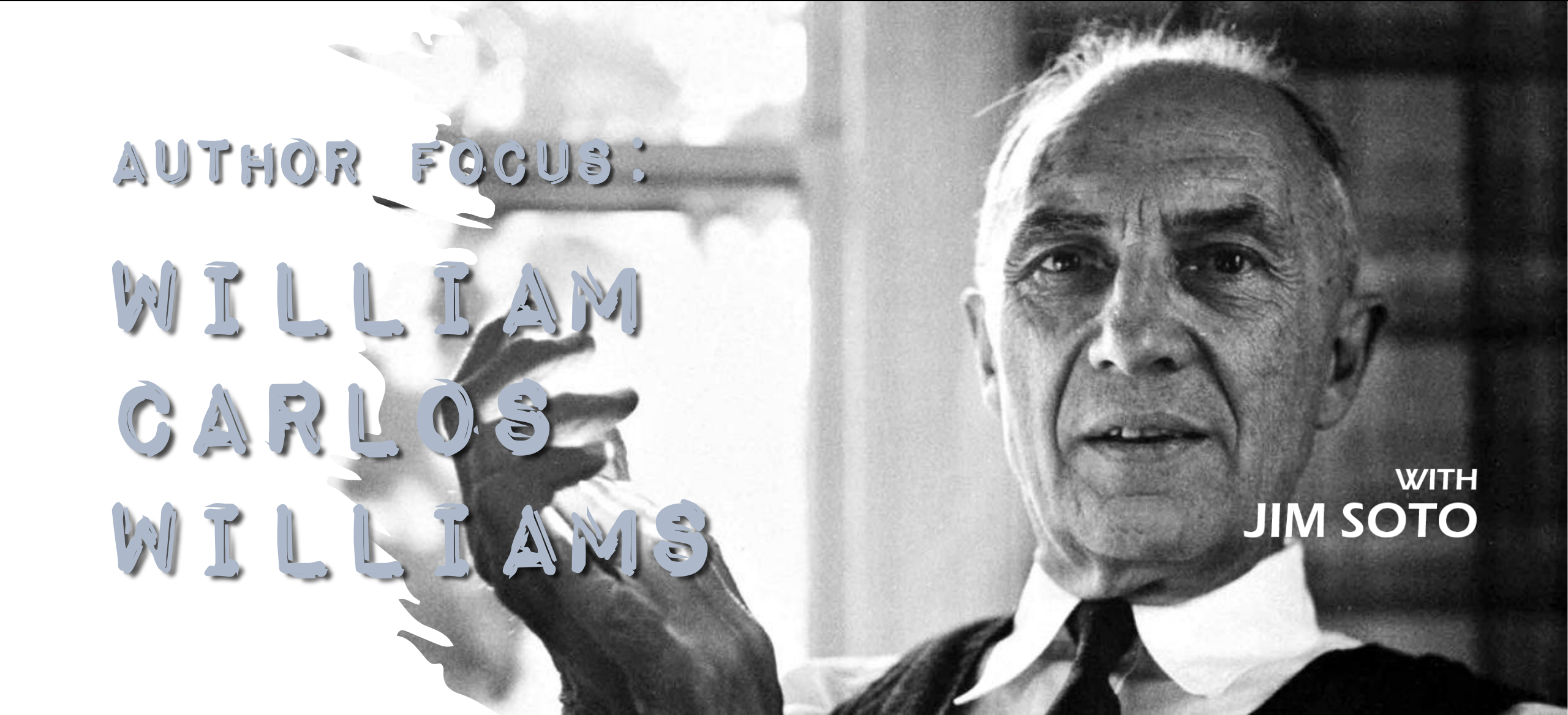
AUTHOR FOCUS:

WILLIAM

CARLOS

WILLIAMS

WITH
JIM SOTO



SPEAK YOUR MIND

One thing we do in our daily conversations is to create “word pictures”, or a vivid descriptions with words.

Focus on an everyday object or event, and think about what it means. How would you explain the meaning of this event or object?

What details would you include in your explanation?

Take a minute to consider and answer the question.

Using word pictures can help you communicate more effectively. Rather than simply telling someone something, you are bringing them into your world with a vivid illustration of your point of view and experience. This diffuses tense situations and opens the door to dialog.

WRITER OF IMAGINISM

William Carlos Williams was born the first of two sons of an English father and a Puerto Rican mother of French, Dutch, Spanish, and Jewish ancestry, and he grew up in Rutherford, New Jersey. He was a medical doctor, poet, novelist, essayist, and playwright.

William Carlos Williams's lifelong desire to create a modern American poetry can be traced in the three poems that follow, which represent works from the beginning, middle, and end of his prolific fifty-year career.





In 1924, Williams rejected the free verse poetic form and began to experiment with **controlled measure**, eventually developing his signature variable feet, or, as he called them, "**loose verses**." Commenting on the iamb, a common metric foot, Williams remarked, "*The iamb is not the normal measure of American speech. The foot has to be expanded or contracted in terms of actual speech. The key to modern poetry is measure, which must reflect the flux of modern life.*"

THE RED WHEELBARROW

One of Williams's early poems (published in 1923), reflects the impact of **Imagism**, a sub-genre of Modernism concerned with creating clear imagery with sharp language. The essential idea was to re-create the physical experience of an object through words. This movement championed the use of free verse and concise images, or word pictures. In just one sentence, sixteen words, Williams creates a series of vivid images.



THIS IS JUST TO SAY

This poem was published in 1934, while Williams still was refining and experimenting with verse. It sometimes is classified as a **found poem**, one in which an existing text has been refashioned and presented as a poem. In terms of structure, a found poem is comparable to a **verbal collage**: words and phrases that have been collected and rearranged to create new meaning. As with a collage, the meaning of a found poem is left to the interpretation of the audience, which is one of the principles of Imagism.



THE DANCE

Published in 1962, at the end of his career, Williams describes the dance in the painting **The Wedding Dance in the Open Air**, which he refers to as The Kermess. The painting was the work of Pieter Brueghel, a Flemish artist from the 1500s best known for his scenes of daily life, as portrayed in the living world of field and forest and of sturdy peasants at work and play. As noted elsewhere, Williams aimed to represent scenes of daily life in his own work.



LITERARY ELEMENTS

Imagery

Refers to the figurative or descriptive language used to create word pictures, or images.

Rhythm

Is the pattern of beats, or stresses, in a line of verse or prose, which can be regular or irregular.

Meter

Is a regular rhythmic pattern in poetry. This pattern is determined by the number of beats, or stresses, in each line.



IMAGE	SENSE APPEALED

Like the other Imagists, Williams developed vivid imagery to create word pictures. As you read each poem, record the specific images in a simple two-column chart. Jot down the image in one column and the sense it appeals to in the second. Also consider Williams's use of rhythm and meter— qualities he experimented with during his career. Read each poem aloud to determine the rhythm, whether regular or irregular. Then decide if each poem has meter.

ASSESSMENT

After reading pages 369-374 in your book, complete the activities:

1. REFER TO TEXT &
2. REASON WITH TEXT
3. & ANALYZE LITERATURE
 - **Imagery, Rhythm, and Meter** - Review the chart of images you created for each poem. To which senses do the images appeal? What object or experience is created in each poem using this imagery?
 - What rhythm, or pattern of beats, did you find in each poem? Is the pattern regular or irregular? Does the poem have meter, or a regular rhythmic pattern? How does the use of rhythm and meter affect your reading and understanding of the poem?



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