

- 24 Goodwin RD, Marusic A, Hoven CW. Suicide attempts in the United States: the role of physical illness. *Soc Sci Med* 2003; **56**: 1783–8.
- 25 Waern M, Rubenowitz E, Runeson B, Skoog I, Wilhemson K, Allbeck P. Burden of illness suicide in elderly people: case-control study. *BMJ* 2002; **324**: 1355–8.
- 26 Bruce ML, Ten Have T, Reynolds CF, Katz II, Schulberg HC, Mulsant BH, Brown GK, McAvay GJ, Pearson JL, Alexopoulos GS. Reducing suicidal ideation and depressive symptoms in depressed older primary care patients: a randomized controlled trial. *JAMA* 2004; **291**: 1081–91.
- 27 Nisbet PA, Duberstein PR, Conwell Y, Seidlitz L. The effect of participation in religious activities on suicide versus natural death in adults 50 and older. *J Nerv Ment Dis* 2000; **188**: 543–6.
- 28 Nock MK, Kessler RC. Prevalence and risk factors for suicide attempts versus suicide gestures: analysis of the National Comorbidity Survey. *J Abnorm Psychol* 2006; **115**: 616–23.
- 29 Hawton K, Fagg J. Suicide, and other causes of death, following attempted suicide. *Br J Psychiatry* 1998; **152**: 359–66.
- 30 Hawton K, Harriss L, Zahl D. Deaths from all causes in a long-term follow-up study of 11,583 deliberate self-harm patients. *Psychol Med* 2006; **36**: 397–405.
- 31 Knox KL, Conwell Y, Caine ED. If suicide is a public health problem, what are we doing to prevent it? *Am J Public Health* 2004; **94**: 37–45.

Poems
by
doctors

Complaint

William Carlos Williams

William Carlos Williams (1883–1963) was born in Rutherford, New Jersey. He studied medicine at University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. His poetry was influenced by Ezra Pound with whom he was one of the principal poets of the Imagist movement. He experimented with meter and lineation and is regarded as one of the founders of free verse. Williams brought an entirely fresh and genuinely American voice to 20th-century poetry. His subject matter was the everyday circumstances of the life of ordinary people. He continued to practise as a doctor for the whole of his life.

They call me and I go.
It is a frozen road
past midnight, a dust
of snow caught
in the rigid wheeltracks.
The door opens.
I smile, enter and
shake off the cold.
Here is a great woman
on her side in the bed.
She is sick,
perhaps vomiting,
perhaps laboring
to give birth to
a tenth child. Joy! Joy!
Night is a room
darkened for lovers,
through the jealousies the sun
has sent one gold needle!
I pick the hair from her eyes
and watch her misery
with compassion.

Collected Poems 1909–1939, Vol. 1, © 1938 by New Directions Publishing Corp. Reprinted by permission of New Directions Publishing Corp.

The British Journal of Psychiatry (2008)
192, 284. doi: 10.1192/bjp.192.4.284