

Williams, The Adoration of the Kings

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The Adoration of the Kings

William Carlos Williams

From the Nativity
which I have already celebrated
the Babe in its Mother's arms

the Wise Men in their stolen
splendor
and Joseph and the soldiery

attendant
with their incredulous faces
make a scene copied we'll say

from the Italian masters
but with a difference
the mastery

of the painting
and the mind the resourceful mind
that governed the whole

the alert mind dissatisfied with
what it is asked to
and cannot do

accepted the story and painted
it in the brilliant
colors of the chronicler

the downcast eyes of the Virgin
as a work of art
for profound worship

Pieter Brueghel, The Adoration of the Kings (1564)

Oil on wood panel, approximately 44 inches x 33 inches. National Gallery, London.

