

The Crowd at the Ball Game

The crowd at the ball game
is moved uniformly
by a spirit of uselessness
which delights them—
all the exciting detail
of the chase
and the escape, the error
the flash of genius—
all to no end save beauty
the eternal—
So in detail they, the crowd,
are beautiful
for this
to be warned against
saluted and defied—
It is alive, venomous
it smiles grimly
its words cut—
The flashy female with her
mother, gets it—
The Jew gets it straight—it
is deadly, terrifying—
It is the Inquisition, the
Revolution
It is beauty itself
that lives
day by day in them
idly—
This is
the power of their faces
It is summer, it is the solstice
the crowd is
cheering, the crowd is laughing
in detail
permanently, seriously
without thought

William Carlos Williams (1921),
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/45498>