CMAJ

HUMANITIES

Роем

William Carlos Williams circumcises Ernest Hemingway's first son

So I said, sure, and why not? The next sweet morning of Paris drunk with the warm scent of rain on gravel in Luxembourg Gardens and my head as big as a bucket a — shall we say — aftereffect of the prizefights we went to the night before the four of us roiled in the grit and sawdust and sweat - Kill him! Kill the bastard! — Flossie cried. So I picked up my leather kit and went back to Hem's flat laid the kid on the kitchen table and lopped off his foreskin — his teeny binky, Hadley cried which in those days was what you did. At the sight of Bumby's blood, bloody big Hem standing at the side of the table holding the kid's head collapsed a sack of potatoes, a tin of lard fainted ker-boom dead to the world. After the days in Paris they kept asking me how could I go back to the pale complexities of practice?

To the grime

of Rutherford's bodies? The drum of routine — I think of Hem on the floor at the first drop of his son's blood. What a man! It isn't anything I could explain, I tell them. Just call it making a living.

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Dr. Coulehan's most recent collection of poems is Medicine Stone (Fithian Press; 2002).