

# The Tennessee Williams Annual Review

## “Shadow Wood”

*Tennessee Williams*



Number 1

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Shadow Wood  
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*Editor's Note*

This poem was discovered in Mr. Dakin Williams's basement in the summer of 1997. According to Mr. Williams, "when we cleaned out Mother's house after her death, there were a number of old boxes of my brother's correspondence. I put the boxes in storage in my basement, and this poem had fallen out of one of those boxes and was on the floor of my basement when I found it."

He is not certain of the date on which it was composed. Since it was written on Japan Air Lines letterhead, one can reasonably speculate that it might have been done on one of Tennessee Williams's early trips to Tokyo--perhaps around 1959 or 1960.

A different version of "Shadow Wood" appeared in a *New Directions* paperbook, *In the Winter of Cities* (1964), with four stanzas and other variants, suggesting that the version printed here in this journal may have been an earlier working draft that eventually found its way into Williams's later collection of poems.

Dakin says of this handwritten version, "judging from the looseness of the script, it is entirely possible that Tom had taken full advantage of the airline's first-class amenities." This version of "Shadow Wood" is published here for the first time. Reprinted by permission of The University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee.



## Shadow Wood

I once looked on a young green tree  
 I have forgotten where it stood  
 I only know the leaves of it  
 scattered light in shadow wood

The leaves of it were tenderness  
 I cannot tell you where it stood  
 for once forgotten, never twice  
 can it be found in shadow wood

For tenderness I would lay down  
 the weapon that holds death away  
 but little words of tenderness  
 are hard for shadow man to say

J.W.

**JAPAN AIR LINES**