

The New Criterion

Poems

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'Script *Ohio*'

by [Elizabeth Spires](#)

A new poem.

—The film an old one, whirring the way memory whirs,
our rotund band director, Mr. Kerns, playing it week
after week as falling leaves signalled another football season,
the slanting autumnal light in the band room darkening
as the Buckeyes, led by a strutting drum major,
finished their famous halftime show with "Script Ohio,"
forming themselves into a snaking line without a break
that slowly spelled, as if a careful hand were writing it out,
an *O*, *H*, *I*, then *O* again, as we watched rapt,
knowing the outcome would always be *Ohio*,
wondering what it would be like to be the one
apart, nameless but glorified: the tiny tuba man who,
at the last moment, runs fast as he can out into
the center of the field to dot the "*i*" in Ohio.

Elizabeth Spires' new book of poems, *The Wave-Maker*, was published by Norton in July 2008.

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