

The New Criterion

Poems

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Christopher Columbus Park

by [W. S. Di Piero](#)

Checkers, bocce, some days rummy or hearts,
early fall under chestnut trees. Then winter,
inside the rec center, bingo and widows
while snow dazes 8th St.'s traffic lights.
Summer, finally, Mikey and Sal
warm themselves in beach chairs on the grass.
Sticky sunshine, stoagies, Phillies games
quacking from transistors, dago red
dispensed from crystal altar-boy cruets
going up in smoke. Some days,
in pressed t-shirts, Sal played sweet potato,
Mikey the mandolin, bald heads nodding
like tulips. Why wasn't I surprised
by its senselessness, the word we used
to justify what happened, anything
that happens, childhood friends at odds
over money, maybe, or baseball stats,
the unions or Democrats, boiling over
as usual, nose to nose, blue in the face,
until, this one time, Mikey goes home
and comes back with his old k ...

W. S. Di Piero's *Chinese Apples: New and Selected Poems* will be published in February by Knopf.

[more from this author](#)

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