

# The New Criterion

## Poems

October 1997

## Couplets

by [Donald Justice](#)

i

Have I not waited with a numbed impatience  
In polite pale rooms with polite anonymous patients?

ii

The auctioneer lifts his gavel. *Going! Going!*  
Whence come we, what are we, whither are we going?

iii

The years stand lonely on their sidings now like abandoned cars.  
The wind is in the wires and snow sifts down on the cars.

iv

The clouds, the vast white Saturday afternoon,  
And the high mournful whistle crying, *noon, noon.*

**Donald Justice** is the author of *Collected Poems* (Knopf).

[more from this author](#)

This article originally appeared in The New Criterion, Volume 16 October 1997, on page 42

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