

The New Criterion

Poems

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Intruder

by [David R. Slavitt](#)

He broke in, picking the lock, or having stolen
a key, and he knew the code to disarm the alarm,

some homeless guy, a crazy street-person, harmless
you'd think, but you're wrong: he likes it here, and he stays.

He rummages through my closets and dresser drawers
and tries on my clothing, which happens, of course, to fit him.

He runs my comb through his hair. He uses my toothbrush.
He lies down on my side of the bed for a nap.

He has settled in. In the mornings, he sits at my place
and has his coffee and toast, reading my paper.

He borrows my car and drives to meet my classes;
during my office hours he meets with my students.

We don't look at all alike, but he's living my life.
I try to signal to friends with whom he dines

or my wife with whom he is sleeping: "This isn't me.
He's an imposter. How can you not have noticed?"

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David R. Slavitt is the author of over sixty books including *Aspects of the Novel: A Novel* published by Catbird Press.

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