

# The New Criterion

## Poems

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### Intruder

by [David 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?"

...

David Slavitt

[more from this author](#)

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