

The New Criterion

Poems

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Little porch at night

by [Gibbons Ruark](#)

Pull up a porch chair next to this chaise longue.
Tell me the empty dark will fill with voices
And talk to me before I end my song.

A summer night, and something has gone wrong
To rob the mild air of familiar faces.
Pull up a porch chair. Next to this chaise longue

A mother should be standing with her long
Hair tucked into a bun. Unwind those tresses
And talk to me before I end my song.

That vacant angle where a hammock hung
Adopts the whole moon in its loneliness.
Pull up a porch chair. Next to this chaise longue.

Summon the fireflies, matches struck and gone,
The Morse code of the stars who've lost their places,
And talk to me before I end my song,

For down there in the shallows should be strung
A taut line from a father to the sea he fishes.

Gibbons Ruark's most recent book is *Passing Through Customs: New and Selected Poems* (Louisiana Louisiana University Press).

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