

# The New Criterion

## Poems

April 2004

### Mowers

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

Untended two months in my absence,  
our backyard's pigweed and razorgrass  
stood waist high against my weed-eater's  
murderous blade. I bent, off balance,  
and scythed tight crescents, mowing with  
no plan—that night I'd dream it nicked  
my shin and hummed into the air  
bone-dust and blood. The dying plants lay  
in loose, soft loaves, like sleepers  
holding close against night fear or wind.  
She who let them grow, preoccupied with us,  
house, far dying parents—one remembers  
childhood German and "meadowlark"  
but not his daughter's name; the ethereal other  
recalls what bountiful future waits—  
stood a safe distance behind, her voice  
wired to the keening edge as gnats  
and damselflies fluttered from my cuts.  
Wanting worse while she tied off sheaves,  
I slanted down to hack and kick up dirt  
and ...

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This article originally appeared in The New Criterion, Volume 22 April 2004, on page 54

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