

The New Criterion

Poems

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Mug shot

by [William Logan](#)

Los Angeles, 1950

Almost nineteen, with Rita Hayworth-hair,
her lips parted between sorrow and seduction,
she has arched on thin eyebrows.

Her name, according to the mug shot,
is Ernesteen, though beneath it
someone has penciled *Delores*.

She might not have chosen to wear this,
her department-store blouse, ruched at the neck,
showing off the sculptural lines of a face

that must have drawn attention
even from strangers.
Perhaps that was the problem.

She looks the sort of woman caught
somewhere she shouldn't have been.
It was 1950, after all, and the narcotics bust

was something to think about,
even if you were white, and pretty,
and thought you knew your way around.

Must I mention that she's beautiful,
this Renaissance ...

William Logan's most recent book of poetry, *Strange Flesh* (Penguin), was published last year.

[more from this author](#)

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