

# The New Criterion

## Poems

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### Mutabor: the gorge

by [Karl Kirchwey](#)

They went down to the gorge of the Petite Gryonne,  
in May, this was, a boy and a girl,  
when the hairs on the stem of the nettle  
stand up straight, and gray-eyed the water runs,

too cold to bear for more than a moment,  
over the basalt pebbles veined with quartz,  
and in the woods a bird pleadingly iterates  
its song against the constant noise of the torrent,

and they lay down not far from a mound of snow  
dumped from the bridge above during the winter,  
from the Roman arch of the bridge, like a small glacier  
shawled with filth and weeping slowly away now,

a hollow melted in it like the cave where immortal Pa ...

**Karl Kirchwey** is the author of five books of poems, including *The Happiness of This World: Poetry and Prose* (2007).

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