

The New Criterion

Poems

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The fruits of the sea

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

A new poem.

First time we've met, her ex-lover boy and I, seated together,
both of them long settled in other beds. She's in the kitchen:
thin hands, bumpy knuckle bones of the dancer she once was,
picking over halibut chunks, squid, mussel flesh,
whatever she fancies, crab meat last. In Barnegat,
my first time out, the traps rattled with blue crabs
hooking the cage, clawing themselves—the sea rang
like her pots and pans and heirloom silverware.

I knew the story he didn't tell, about their young affair.
Unfinished images: heavy-muscled braid to her waist, leggy,
toe shoes pegging their marks, finding in that body in the mirror
the desired line. On the water, I knew the sun pressing my back
would hurt, and she later said that while the Love God and I jawed,
the new wife dropped by the kitchen. "I came to greet the help.
I like your new head"—gi ...

W. S. Di Piero's *Chinese Apples: New and Selected Poems* will be published in February by Knopf.

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