

The New Criterion

Poems

May 2007

You have flown to the dangerous country

by [Elizabeth Spires](#)

You have flown to the dangerous country,
how easily you have left this life behind,
this street, this quiet city street,
where letters arrive each day dependably,
where trees make a canopy in summer,
and winter, it is winter now, possesses a cold clarity.

But in the place where you are there is heat,
there is hunger, and the trees have been cut down,
and dogs, there must be dogs, slink out of the night's
blackness, teeth bared, and the sound of drumming penetrates
your sleep even when there are no drums. And slowly,
you begin to forget the words we are used to saying here,
they speak another language there, a language that has no place
for words like *snow* and *safety*, a language I will never know
because I have never been to the dangerous country,

...

Elizabeth Spires

[more from this author](#)

This article originally appeared in The New Criterion, Volume 25 May 2007, on page 30

Copyright © 2009 The New Criterion | www.newcriterion.com

<http://www.newcriterion.com/articles.cfm/You-have-flown-to-the-dangerous-country-3156>