

# The New Criterion

## Poems

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### “Eurylochus recalls the Sirens”

by [Daniel Mark Epstein](#)

A new poem.

When we returned from Hell, that sorceress  
Who so loved our captain she set him free,  
Feasted us with meat and bread and wine,  
Praising us for our great-heartedness:  
“In going down alive to the House of Hades,  
You will have died twice instead of once—  
Which is enough for any man to bear.”  
Sunset. And we sailors all lay down  
To sleep by the stern cables of our ship.  
But shapely Circe kept Odysseus up  
Making love to him for the last time, again  
And again, an infinity of kisses, and then  
Warned him of the dangers that lay ahead.

Of Scylla and Charybdis I shall not speak,  
For there are horrors memory consumes  
With the men who are consumed by them.  
Six comrades of my youth were plucked aloft  
By that she-monster with six grinding mouths.  
No mercy there, except their death was quick.

The Sirens cut the wound that w ...

**Daniel Mark Epstein** wrote the libretto for the opera *Jefferson and Poe*, with music by Damon Ferrante.

[more from this author](#)

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