

The New Criterion

Poems

April 2005

Daybreak, Benedict Canyon

by [Timothy Steele](#)

Thick fog has filled the canyon overnight
And turned it to a sea of milky gray.
The steep-sloped chaparral and streets below
Are drowned from view; hilltops across the way
Form a low-lying archipelago
Upon the fog's smothering gulfs and shoals.
The scene, in the uncertain pre-dawn light,
Recalls those Chinese landscapes on silk scrolls

In which mists haunt ravines, and clouds surround
Remote peaks fading to remoter skies.
The scene suggests, too, the apocalypse
The earth may suffer if sea levels rise.
This very deck might be a ghostly ship's
And I a lone survivor, cast by fate
Out on a flood as lifeless and profound
As the one Noah had to navigate.

Yet soon this world's specifics will revive
And banish fanciful analogies.
Some mourning doves, on airily whistling wings, ...

Timothy Steele is **Timothy Steele's** latest book is *All the Fun's in How You Say a Thing* (Ohio University Press).

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This article originally appeared in The New Criterion, Volume 23 April 2005, on page 25

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