

# The New Criterion

## Poems

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### Ethel Taylor

by [Timothy Steele](#)

Bookkeeper for a small firm that made dyes,  
She boarded at my grandparents' and loved  
But had an allergy to strawberries.  
Strawberry imagery adorned her note cards;  
On her wall hung a still life of a dish  
With strawberries, three apples, and a lemon;  
Her teacups had a strawberry motif,  
Red fruits and green stems twining round their bowls.  
Such was her predilection and good nature  
That she seized chances to help others savor  
What fate and her physician had denied her;  
And on snow-muffled evenings when I shoveled  
My grandparents' front walk, she'd have me in  
And serve me strawberry preserves on toast;  
Or in the summer when I mowed the lawn  
She'd hull fresh berries for ...

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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