

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

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