

# The New Criterion

## Poems

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### In Lincoln

by [Leslie Norris](#)

Passing the south side,  
His years turning heavier,  
He did not need the cathedral  
To warn him of the Last Judgment.

Nor was his room  
In the hospitable college  
Where he would speak the next day  
A comfort for his unease.

He placed on the table  
His reading for the morning.  
Prepared for the night  
He lay without sleep.

Deliberately calm,  
Anticipating nothing,  
He was overwhelmed  
By a revelation of mortality.

Nothing remained  
Of the tangible carpentry  
Of door and window,  
Nor of the cathedral's implacable mass.

The sensuous world had vanished.  
His hands grasped a felt nothing,  
His eyes stared at a visible nothing,  
Nothing surrounded him.

He had no hands.  
He had no eyes.  
He was aware only  
That he experienced < ...

**Leslie Norris'** latest book is *Albert and the Angels* (Farras, Straus & Giroux).

[more from this author](#)

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