

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

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