

The New Criterion

Poems

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Mezzo cammin

by [Geoffrey Brock](#)

Today, as I jogged down the center line
of a closed-off, rain-glossed road, lost in a rhythm,
the memory of a boy returned: fifteen

or so, barefoot in faded cut-off jeans,
sprinting past neighbors' houses, tears drifting
into his ears, heart yanking at its seams—

he hoped they'd rip and didn't slow at all
for more than a mile. After crossing Mission,
the boy collapsed beneath an oak, his whole

body one cramp. (But later the secret smile,
imagining Guinness there—the clock-men stunned!)
Twenty years gone, that race so vivid still,

yet I can't for the life of me recall the gun:
who was it, or what, that made me start to run?

...

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