

The New Criterion

Poems

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Mowers

by [W. S. Di Piero](#)

Untended two months in my absence,
our backyard's pigweed and razorgrass
stood waist high against my weed-eater's
murderous blade. I bent, off balance,
and scythed tight crescents, mowing with
no plan—that night I'd dream it nicked
my shin and hummed into the air
bone-dust and blood. The dying plants lay
in loose, soft loaves, like sleepers
holding close against night fear or wind.
She who let them grow, preoccupied with us,
house, far dying parents—one remembers
childhood German and "meadowlark"
but not his daughter's name; the ethereal other
recalls what bountiful future waits—
stood a safe distance behind, her voice
wired to the keening edge as gnats
and damselflies fluttered from my cuts.
Wanting worse while she tied off sheaves,
I slanted down to hack and kick up dirt
and ...

W. S. Di Piero's *Chinese Apples: New and Selected Poems* will be published in February by Knopf.

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