

The New Criterion

Poems

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The Traveler's calendar

by [Daniel Mark Epstein](#)

Dawn opens the accordion of façades,
Formstone and striped awnings of a street
Robber Barons paved to lure the drones
Hived in textile mills along the Falls
A hundred years ago.
In my corner room
With a view of row-house cornices and
The ruined forest on the hill beyond
I keep no clock or mirror.
I want no ticking image to remind
My muse of Time's progress on this front,
The dial of minutes or my quotidian face.
Nothing temporal excites this place
But daylight, nightfall and the creeping dust,
Metamorphic wind against the glass—
And this eternal Traveler's calendar,
Months adorned by Currier & Ives.

Faithful as Christmas, the agent of doom
Sends me this quaint scroll from Connecticut.
You know the type: a paper monument
To Mark Twain's America, the cake-tin
Rococo sweetness of the Gilded Age.
Janu ...

Daniel Mark Epstein wrote the libretto for the opera *Jefferson and Poe*, with music by Damon Ferrante.

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