

# The New Criterion

Poems March 2014

## These are the happiest days

by Erica McAlpine

*Miami*

Under this canvas cabana, white bower  
of unadulterated hope, I won't tell  
you these are the happiest days we'll ever  
pass. Best not to say.

Nothing will come and steal from us this hour  
unless it's our nagging, aggravating will  
to think of things always as worse than they are,  
to cloud up the day,

as it were. Otherwise, it's in our power  
to spend the whole afternoon drinking our fill  
of sun (soaking now through the canvas over  
us) and even say

what's on our minds a little. Because showers  
do come (look at Cornelia and Raphael—  
one split second and she lost him forever).  
It's the normal way

of things to bloom and brighten, then turn sour.  
We haven't been singled out—we're not *bad* souls.  
But happiness rarely stays in place. These are  
the happiest days.

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