

# The New Criterion

Poems June 1985

## Vine

by Alan Shapiro

*for Della*

The previous tenants must have left it here  
because it settled twisting up around  
the trellis of the mullioned windows so  
tenaciously they couldn't take it down;

they couldn't budge the huge pot on the floor  
for all the tendrils rooted in the cracks  
between the window and the window frame,  
pressing their heart-shaped leaves against the glass.

So we could trace out every kind of weather:  
a cross unyielding sun in the burned tips,  
or shade no sun could break where deep green paled  
and narrowed in a whitening eclipse.

Or days, like this day, when the early light  
brings all out of doors into the waiting leaves  
which suddenly have known no other time  
than dwelling in this green light light receives.

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