

# The New Criterion

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## The rise

by Louis Simpson

I fished out in the middle  
and fished around the shore,  
I fished all day and caught nothing . . .  
only the creak of oarlocks  
and the cry of a moorhen  
and beat of geese flying over.

The next day Monaghan came  
in his van. Joe's an artist  
and one of the best fly-fishermen.  
I said they ought to stock the lake.  
No, he said, for the small fish  
take everything. The big ones  
grow despondent and lie on the bottom.

That night he took me out with him.  
No rowing . . . he had an outboard motor.  
We anchored off a point in the dark  
and waited.

Around ten-thirty  
the night came alive with splashes.  
He stood and cast, lunging toward the sound.  
The rise lasted for half an hour  
and when the night was still again  
he had caught three lovely fish.

Some day I'd like to go back  
and hear the cry of a moorhen  
and learn from that man how to fish.

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