

The New Criterion

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Couplets

by Donald Justice

i

Have I not waited with a numbed impatience
In polite pale rooms with polite anonymous patients?

ii

The auctioneer lifts his gavel. *Going! Going!*
Whence come we, what are we, whither are we going?

iii

The years stand lonely on their sidings now like abandoned cars.
The wind is in the wires and snow sifts down on the cars.

iv

The clouds, the vast white Saturday afternoon,
And the high mournful whistle crying, *noon, noon.*

Donald Justice is the author of *Collected Poems* (Knopf).

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